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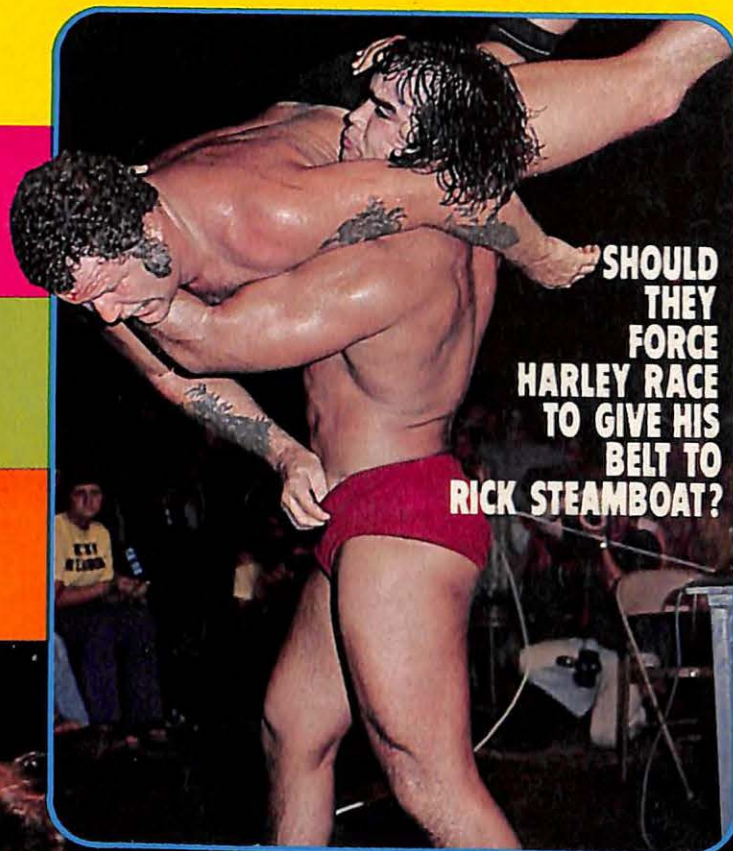
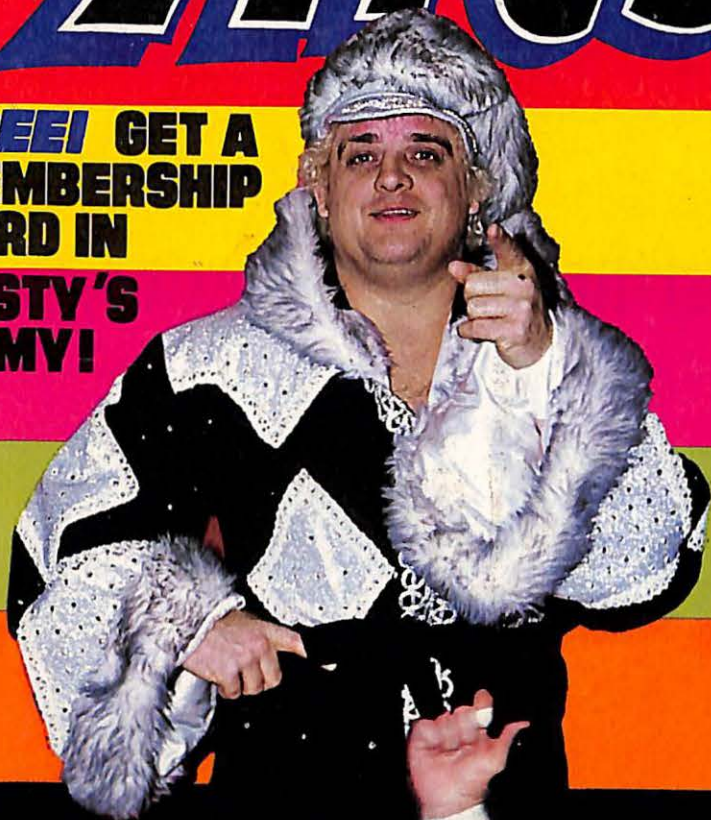
VICTORY SPORTS SERIES

**BOB BACKLUND:
"SOMETIMES I THINK
THE TITLE WILL KILL ME"**

November 1978
47727 \$1.00

Wrestling

**FREE! GET A
MEMBERSHIP
CARD IN
DUSTY'S
ARMY!**



**SHOULD
THEY
FORCE
HARLEY RACE
TO GIVE HIS
BELT TO
RICK STEAMBOAT?**



**Ric Flair vs. Dick Slater
THE MATCH
THAT
NEVER WAS**



when I planned to **retire before**

this is the business that made it possible

Starting with borrowed money, in just eight years I gained financial security, sold out at a profit and retired.

"Not until I was forty did I make up my mind that I was going to retire before ten years had passed. I knew I couldn't do it on a salary, no matter how good. I knew I couldn't do it working for others. It was perfectly obvious to me that I had to start a business of my own. But that posed a problem. What kind of business? Most of my money was tied up. Temporarily I was broke. But, when I found the business I wanted I was able to start it for a small amount of borrowed money.

"To pyramid this investment into retirement in less than ten years seems like magic, but in my opinion any man in good health who has the same ambition and drive that motivated me, could achieve such a goal. Let me give you a little history.

"I finished high school at the age of 18 and got a job as a shipping clerk. My next job was butchering at a plant that processed boneless beef. Couldn't see much future there. Next, I got a job as a Greyhound Bus Driver. The money was good. The work was pleasant, but I couldn't see it as leading to retirement. Finally I took the plunge and went into business for myself.

"I managed to raise enough money with my savings to invest in a combination motel, restaurant, grocery, and service station. It didn't take long to get

my eyes opened. In order to keep that business going my wife and I worked from dawn to dusk, 20 hours a day, seven days a week. Putting in all those hours didn't match my idea of independence and it gave me no time for my favorite sport—golf! Finally we both agreed that I should look for something else.

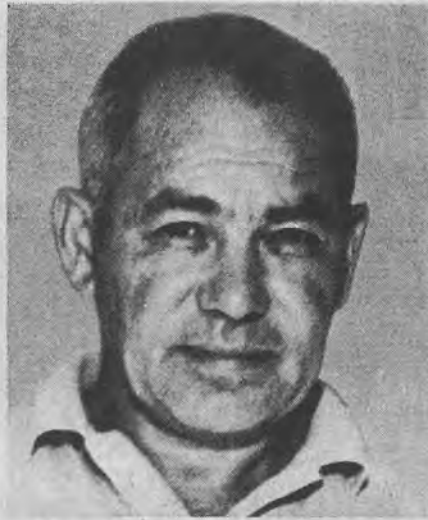
"I found it. Not right away. I investigated a lot of businesses offered as franchises. I felt that I wanted the guidance of an experienced company—wanted to have the benefit of the plans that had brought success to others, plus the benefit of running my own business under an established name that had national recognition.

"Most of the franchises offered were too costly for me. Temporarily all my capital was frozen in the motel. But I found that the Duraclean franchise offered me exactly what I had been looking for.

"I could start for a small amount. (Today, as little as \$1985 starts a Duraclean dealership.) I could work it as a one-man business to start. No salaries to pay. I could operate from my home. No office or shop or other overhead. For transportation, I could use the trunk of my car. (I bought the truck later, out of profits.) And best of all, there was no ceiling on my earn-

fifty

a true story
by John B. Haikey



ings. I could build a business as big as my ambition and energy dictated. I could put on as many men as I needed to cover any volume. I could make a profit on every man working for me. And I could build little by little, or as fast as I wished.

"So, I started. I took the wonderful training furnished by the company. When I was ready I followed the simple plan outlined in the training. During the first period I did all the service work myself. By doing it myself, I could make much more per hour than I had ever made on a salary. Later, I would hire men, train them, pay them well, and still make an hourly profit on their time that made my idea of retirement possible—I had joined the country club and now I could play golf whenever I wished.

"What is this wonderful business? It's Duraclean. And what is Duraclean? It's an improved, space-age process for cleaning upholstered furniture, rugs and tacked down carpets. It not only cleans but it enlivens and sparkles up the colors. It does not wear down the fiber or drive dirt into the base of the rug as machine scrubbing does. Instead it lifts out the dirt by means of an absorbent dry foam.

"Furniture dealers and department stores refer their customers to the Duraclean Specialist. Insurance men say Duraclean can save them money on fire claims. Hotels, motels, specialty shops and big stores make annual contracts for keeping their carpets and furniture fresh and clean. One Duraclean Specialist signed a contract for over \$40,000 a year for just one hotel.

"Well, that's the business I was able to start with such a small investment. That's the business I built up over a period of eight years. And, that's the business I sold out at a substantial profit before I was fifty."

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THE LID OFF PRO WRESTLING

INSIDE *Wrestling*

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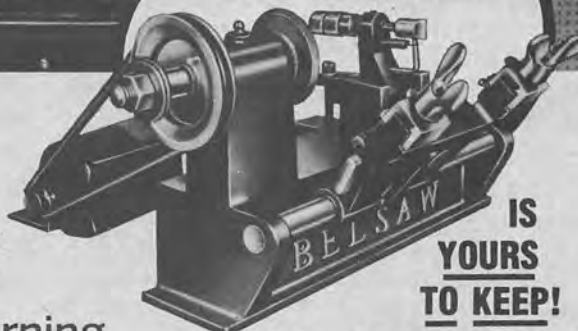
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

There's something special about to happen. And it's all because of the greatness of a young superstar named Dino Bravo.

First, a little background. As most knowledgeable fans are aware, the single greatest record in wrestling history is "Most Consecutive Victories Within 15 Minutes." The current mark of 142 straight was set by the legendary Lou Thesz in 1949. Most experts felt this record would never be broken.

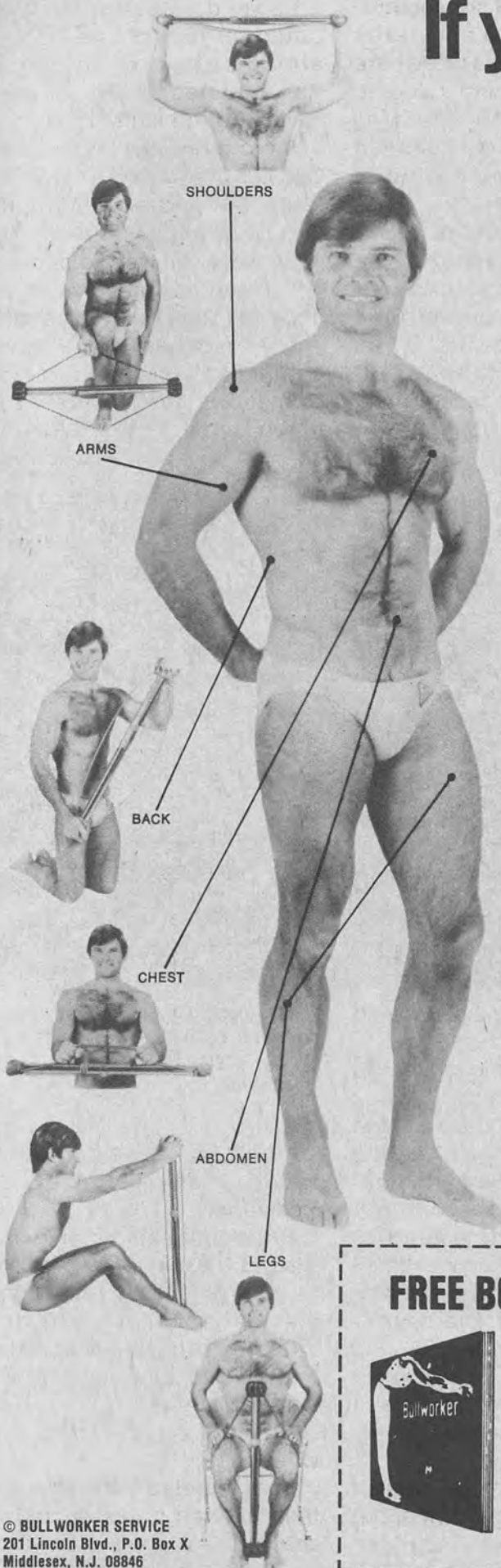
The closest anyone came to breaking Thesz's record was Andre the Giant, who scored 97 wins within 15 minutes last year. Andre's streak was broken when he wrestled to a one-hour draw with AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel on September 27, 1977.

But now, let's get back to Dino Bravo. As of this writing, Dino has a streak of 51 victories in a row within 15 minutes. Yes, I realize Dino is still nearly 100 short of Thesz's mark. But this young man has shown such fantastic wrestling ability of late I feel he has an outside shot at the all-time record. By the way, Bravo's current mark of 51 in a row puts him 14th on the all-time list, right behind the 55 straight of former NWA and WWWF champion Buddy Rogers.

We will all know more very soon as to whether Dino can keep the win streak going. According to WWWF promoters, Bravo will soon be tested against main event competition like Graham, Steele, and Stasiak. If Bravo continues to triumph against men like these, he may be on his way to the new record. Remember, he must win within 15 minutes each time.

I have ordered a camera crew and two staff reporters to follow Dino in each of his upcoming matches. We may be in the middle of the biggest sports story of the century. If history is to be made, I want to be sure the readers of INSIDE WRESTLING have a ringside seat.

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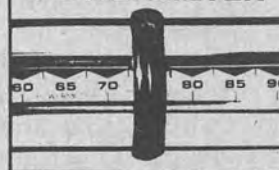
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ON THE ROAD

with
GARY MORGENSTEIN

I HAD DRIVEN 19 consecutive hours, worn out a tire, nearly contracted malaria somewhere in Pennsylvania, and had the worst cold of my life. Dedication, they would call it in the office. Stupid, stupid, stupid, is what I say.

The grey bleakness of Grand Central Station echoed the shadows of my fears. I clutched the key in my pocket and sauntered as casually as someone who hasn't shaved or bathed or eaten a decent meal in six days could. Hell, I was in

little weird, eats cigars and has a tattoo of Eisenhower on his arm. He could be trusted. He has an autographed picture of Backlund in his bedroom.

I told him what I wanted. His thin lips chewed on a cigar, bald head nodded automatically, and he developed the negatives. They were still wet. I didn't care. I just wanted to see what they showed. Then I wanted to sleep.

The pictures were devastating. Far worse than what the woman with the big brown eyes in the Burger King in Iowa had



New York. My dark beard and smelly body was class here.

The key fit into the locker. So far, so good. I refused to look around. I expected Lou Albano to leap out of the shadows. No, only a large rat. Same thing. I cautiously opened the dull door and saw, within the emptiness of the dark locker, a small envelope. I took it, saw it had no inscription, saw the vulgar blackmail it contained was concealed by the supposed innocence of the bag, and hurriedly shoved it beneath my frayed denim jacket.

I drove to the camera shop. I could have used our office, but decided to employ an old friend of mine. Guy was in the Army, a

This is a photo of Bob with an ardent fan. Albano tried to say the man was a friend of his—trying to incriminate the young champion!

suggested. Powerful, devastating indictments of Bob Backlund.

Backlund taking money from Albano. Backlund slipping a foreign object into his trunks, maybe a razor. Backlund sabotaging Mil Mascaras' boots. Backlund and Albano eating together.

All lies. All doctored. Now what?

I could destroy them and say the hell with it, take a shower, shave, lay down, wake up. I

(Continued on page 46)

THE SPECTRUM
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Whatever it is you need or want, Witchcraft can get it for you quickly, easily, and automatically, say these experts. You'll discover how it can bring abundant and overflowing wealth, find or bring back a lover, ward off evil influences, and much more—step-by-step in plain English, with complete easy-to-follow instructions!

Yes... Witchcraft! Every time you hear the word it brings with it the feelings of deep occult secrets—secrets that you would like to know so that your life can be better; so that your enemies will stop bothering you; so that serenity, love, power and comfort can be yours!

THE MAGIC POWER OF WITCHCRAFT lays bare these secrets for the first time! Do you want a bank account bursting at the seams with money? A love life that would make a sultan envious? Supreme power to crush your enemies and reward your friends? What would it be worth to you to utter a simple incantation that would cause any pain to vanish? Or say another, and immediately recover some lost object?

What would it be worth to you to fly through time and space, on astral wings, as Witches do... go wherever you wish... do whatever you wish... without being detected... watch the antics of others behind closed doors... hear private conversations... make time run forward or backward... read tomorrow's newspaper in a "black mirror"... find out what really happened in history... make your face old or young at will!

BRINGS AUTOMATIC ASSURED SUCCESS!

Witchcraft can bring your heart's desire! You can use it to heal someone, influence the boss to give you that raise, or make someone stop bothering you! It's easy! The easiest thing in the world! You don't have to be wealthy or super-intelligent to get started! Thousands of ordinary people all over the world are using Witchcraft Power right now!

Witches have known for centuries that people are scared of them and their powers! And rightly so! NOW YOU CAN SHARE THE SAME POWER that gives you—literally—life and death control over other persons! Is someone bothering you? No problem at all, with Magic Witchcraft. For example, there is a spell called the "Cross Not My Path" ritual, for people who are having neighbor trouble. When you use it, you know you will never again have trouble with this neighbor!

With these amazing Witchcraft secrets, other people will look up to you—in awe—you'll automatically dazzle others with your power to make things happen at your will, you'll be Master of your destiny, and never have to apologize to anyone for anything!

Whatever you want or need, whatever frustration is bothering you, Witchcraft will help you. It is not evil nor is it Black Magic. Like electricity, it is simply a power given by nature for the use of men, to make life easier.

You'll see how to get paid without working... how to get expensive clothes and furs FREE... how to get a first-class plane seat FREE... how to vacation at the finest hotels, motels, pools and pleasure palaces, start living like a millionaire as Witches do!

AMAZING TECHNIQUE HAS HELPED THOUSANDS!

Witchcraft secrets like these can make you rich faster than anything else in the world! Here's how others have used them to make

IN THIS WITCH BOOK YOU'LL DISCOVER...

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- Telepathy Made Easy!
- Influencing Others to Do Your Bidding!
- Controlling a Conversation!
- The Technique of Silent Persuasion!
- Using Witchcraft to Find Friends!
- How to Find the Lover You Want!
- How to Bring Your Perfect Mate to You!
- How to Dominate Others!
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- Witchcraft Power to Make You Irresistible to Others!
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- How to Always Win with Luck Spells!
- More Power for Bigger Goals!
- Inhaling Cosmic Energy!
- Recharging Your Cosmic Batteries!
- Raising Your Vital Energy Level!
- How to Keep Evil Forces Away!

miracles happen in their daily lives!

You'll see how Vern, a man who likes to give a lot of expensive parties, was always short of cash until he discovered the amazing WITCHES MONEY JAR—now all he has to do is dip in, for it brings him an endless flow of cash! Evelyn, a waitress, was always lending money to friends, and was always broke. Finally, she placed her last dollar on the table, and worked the MONEY MAGNET SPELL over it. All at once, dozens of people who had borrowed money from her, rushed to pay her back!

Hank was perpetually broke. One night he got together with some friends, and they decided to cast the MONEY SPELL. The very next day, Hank received in the mail a check for some \$250 worth of insurance. (He had never heard of the company that sent the check; he was not insured with them, and had never even made a claim—but he accepted the money.) Another member of the group that used the spell, a 40-year-old secretary, received an automobile as a gift! All the other members of the group received amazing windfalls of money, as well! You'll see how Dexter, a retiree, lives RENT FREE and receives \$200 a week at the age of 78, with a secret you'll find in this Witch Book! You'll see how Claudine, a secretary, was able to wear the finest, most expensive furs—FREE—and spend weekends at an expensive ski lodge in the mountains, where she met a wonderful man! How Ruth L., a widow—with nothing but a small pension, and a little savings—received her dream house, by using a simple 5-minute ritual on page 38 of this book!

Using the same Witchcraft secrets, YOU can achieve peace of mind and freedom from money worries for the rest of your life!

YOU CAN HEAL YOURSELF AS WITCHES DO!

Feeling sick today? Plagued by a lot of troublesome illnesses? Perhaps some relative is sick and constantly demanding your attention? Or perhaps it is even a pet that needs help? With the MAGIC POWER OF WITCHCRAFT, you can cure anything, say authors Gavin and Yvonne Frost: "In our experience... we have not found a single incurable disease!"

• **ANDY DISSOLVES A GALLSTONE!**—Andy M. developed gallstones. When his illness became too troublesome to ignore, he went to a doctor. Urine tests revealed that he was chronically alkaline. His body was badly out of balance. Using this Witchcraft method to restore balance to the mind and body—in a short while, X-rays showed that he had no more gallstones! Andy never again suffered the excruciating pain of passing stones!

In the same way, say Gavin and Yvonne Frost, almost all illness can be prevented. You are actually employing an ancient Witchcraft method to remove diseased tissue! Even if you do not have any belief in the results, the power will work for you!

One woman, who had been in a wheelchair for 26 years, due to polio and arthritis, used the Witchcraft healing method, and reported that she had no pain and could walk and garden again! A man reported that his son's deep 3rd degree burns miraculously healed overnight!

• **SO SIMPLE A CHILD USES IT!**—A 4-year-old girl asked if she could try to heal a man who was limping—due to a torn ligament—with this simple Witchcraft healing method. In a matter of moments, she started her chant, laying her hands on the weak ankle. The man was miraculously cured! To skeptics, this should be convincing PROOF that anyone can use it!

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Whether you want infinite wealth, or just a comfortable new home, financial security, fine possessions, love, companionship, new health and vigor, power to control others, secret knowledge, protection from evil, or anything else, the magic power of Witchcraft can bring it to you quickly, easily and automatically! It's the easiest thing in the world!

• **HOW TO SEE INTO THE FUTURE!**—Would you like to be able to see the future? You CAN with the magic Black Mirror you'll see how to make on page 23. All you need is some ink and a bowl of water. Then use the chant on this page, and you will be able to see many things. One man uses it to read tomorrow's newspaper. YOU can use it to check the stock market or that important horse race!

• **MAKE TIME RUN BACKWARD OR FORWARD!**—A



MEET THE AUTHORS

GAVIN FROST, B.Sc., Ph.D., D.D., is Archbishop of the Church of Wicca, New Bern, North Carolina with national headquarters in Salem, Missouri, branches in several states and worldwide membership. He is Marshal of the Gold Star of England, with the right to wear the Saffron Robe and one of the very few Witches in the Western Hemisphere privileged to wear the authentic mark of initiation on his wrist. Although descended from a long line of mystics and scholars, and formerly a Vice-President and Director of International Operations for major aerospace companies, he prefers to be thought of as a humble teacher.

Mrs. YVONNE FROST, A.A., D.D., with her husband Gavin Frost, devotes her time to giving private instruction and publishing *Survival*, the newsletter of the Church of Wicca, of which she is a Bishop.

Articles by or about Gavin and Yvonne Frost have appeared in such national publications as *Midnight* and the *National Enquirer*.

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• **SECRETS OF SILENT PERSUASION!**—There is a magic handshake that Witches often use, revealed on page 62. With this secret, you can implant a thought in someone's mind! You can use this Witchcraft power to dominate others! Control your boss! Make someone love you! Leave your enemies groveling in the dust! There is even a gazing technique Witches use on page 45, for identical thoughts. With this secret, you can read your friend's mind and share his or her identical thoughts!

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TOP SECRET

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by Randy
Gordon



CAPTAIN LOUIS ALBANO had just returned from what I understand was a totally relaxing vacation—relaxing because he did not have to put up with me! Little did he realize that on the day he returned to the arena, planning and scheming his dastardly deeds, he would have to deal with me once more.

As usual, I had gotten to the arena quite early. Walking down the hall outside the dressing rooms, I spotted what I was looking for. A yellow piece of paper was taped to the door of dressing room #8. On it was written, "Lou Albano and The Lumberjacks." I pushed the door open slowly, checked the dressing room, found it empty, and entered. Then I worked fast. Investigative reporters have to work fast. I opened my attache case, removed some adhesive tape and a bugging device, and fastened the device—the size of a dime—beneath a rubbing table in the room. Then I left in a hurry. Make it twice that fast.

I then found a dressing room that wasn't going to be used, and set up my equipment—a tape recorder and an audio receiver. All I had to do then was wait.

About 20 minutes later, my audio receiver came alive with the unmistakable, gruff sound of Albano. Then came the voices of The Lumberjacks. Laughter followed. Long, loud, devilish laughter. What followed was incredible!

Albano and The Lumberjacks had planned on donning black tights, cloaks and masks, and calling themselves, "The Masked Marauding Matadors."

(Continued on page 48)

BEST

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Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket

WATCHING DUSTY RHODES wrestle is like standing downwind from a newly manured field. Both experiences stink.

There was once a time when Rhodes was a decent wrestler. He used to be one of The Outlaws, a tag team comprised of himself and Dick Murdoch. They were dangerous, merciless, and magnificent.



Here is your "scientific" whale trying to break poor Ray Stevens' head with a weapon Rhodes says is legal!

Few teams since then have approached their skill and daring.

But something happened to Dusty. He experienced sort of a spiritual lobotomy. The greatness of his skill wasn't enough. He wanted the cheers of fans, a



Old moron is bloody and poor Waldo Von Erich is being squashed. How good old Waldo survived the odor is beyond me!

prize comparable to winning "Most Popular" at the insane asylum. Turning his back on the sport, Dusty went to the unwashed masses and begged forgiveness. He further promised to do everthing in his power to please the fans. Dusty sold his soul to the dumbbells.

Today, Dusty is beloved by boobs from coast to coast. It's enough to make a thinking person sick. Instead of wrestling for the sport, he challenges real heroes like Spiros Arion and Superstar Graham just to please the fans. Dusty has become garbage. He is worse than garbage. He's pollution.

Garbage is disgusting but harmless. Pollution eats into the very marrow, destroying everything in its path. Fortunately, Dusty has been prevented, by



My buddy Tank Patton is horrified. He was wrestling clean and Rhodes began to break rules left and right!

his lack of ability, from ruining the careers of stars like Ric Flair, Graham, and Ken Patera. But he could get lucky. That would be a tragedy.

So far, luck has had enough good taste not to be seen with Rhodes. It's no surprise that the fool has never won a world championship. Wrestlers who go for glory instead of quality

(Continued on page 50)

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NAMES MAKI

Gutless United States heavy-weight champion **RIC FLAIR** has placed a bounty on the head of **BLACKJACK MULLIGAN**. Unable to do away with his arch rival, Flair is offering \$10,000 to any wrestler who can eliminate Mulligan from the wrestling scene.

Experts predict that the **YUKON LUMBERJACKS**, managed by **CAPTAIN LOU**



DINO BRAVO

ALBANO, will have the shortest reign of any **WWWF** tag team champions in history... If it hadn't been for outside help on the part of **TOMMY RICH**, **MR. WRESTLING II** would have been unmasked by the duo of **IVAN KOLOFF** and **OLE ANDERSON**. "As soon as I saw them sneak attack II and start to tear that mask, I ran to his aid," Tommy explained. "How could anyone be so rotten as to try and unmask such a fine man!"... **DOUG GILBERT**



RIC FLAIR

is furious because so many fans think he is the man under the mask of **THE GOLDEN TERROR**. "I don't need any damn mask!" explodes Gilbert. "I hope that creep shows his face so the public will be convinced it is not me!"

DINO BRAVO on challenging **WWWF** champion **BOB BACKLUND**: "Bobby is my good friend, but the name of the game is to win a major title. I think a match against Bobby would be one everyone would want to see. I hope the promoters will sign it soon."... **BRUNO SAMMARTINO** is wrestling on a monthly basis in Puerto Rico... George "**THE ANIMAL**" **STEELE** has gone into seclusion after failing to win the **WWWF** title... Latest rumor regarding the identity of **SPOILER II**—it might be **BUDDY WOLFF**.

Manager **GARY HART** has had a major falling out with protege **LEROY BROWN**... **BRUISER BRODIE** is signed to wrestle in St. Louis, Missouri. The Missouri

State Champion **BRUISER** (not to be confused with Bruiser Brodie) is first on Brodie's list of men to eliminate as soon as he gets to town... **THE ASSASSINS** dethroned **RICKY GIBSON** and **DON FARGO** to win the Southeastern tag team title... **RON FULLER** is wrestling viciously in the Alabama area and has started using the deadly piledriver as his main weapon... **MIGHTY IGOR** has been teaming with young **STEVE OLSONOSKI** in the **AWA**. They form a fine, well-balanced duo.

It was **RUFUS R. JONES** who was disqualified for going berserk in his challenge match against **AWA** champion **NICK BOCKWINKLE**... **KEVIN VON ERICH** was brilliant in his match against **DALE VALENTINE**. His



THE LUMBERJACKS

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...

clever tactics forced Dale to resort to some illegal maneuvers that eventually lead to his disqualification . . . Mid-Atlantic champion KEN PATERA says he does not want to wrestle HARLEY RACE for the NWA title. "What the hell do I need another Mickey Mouse belt for!" exclaims Patera. "Everyone knows I can beat Race. The entire world knows I am the best. I don't need a stupid piece of tin to prove it!"

What a shame, VICTOR RIVERA becoming a vicious rulebreaker. When you talk about scientific talent there was no one



BRUISER BRODIE

better. FRED BLASSIE is now advising Victor and teaching him to become even more ferocious—if that's possible . . . TONY GAREA and LARRY ZBYSZKO are teaming again . . . BOBO BRAZIL is accepting matches in the WWF areas. Fans in the East

love Bobo . . . BOB ROOP is being cheered in Tennessee.

It couldn't last—referring to "Handsome" JIM VALIANT as a scientific wrestler in Tennessee. As



JIM VALIANT



VICTOR RIVERA

predicted in this column several months ago, Jim has made things official—he's a bad guy again! . . . BOB SWEETAN wants to know why there's so much fuss about talented RON STARR. "I've seen that twerp wrestle and I could flatten him in less than one minute!" Sweetan boasts . . . TANK PATTON dropped out of sight for three weeks and



DUSTY RHODES

concentrated on some new holds and a slight change of style. Many observers feel that the big Tank will become a top contender now.

The Texas Bullrope match between DUSTY RHODES and SUPERSTAR GRAHAM (the first of its kind at New York's Madison Square Garden) was one of the most exciting matches ever seen in the huge sports palace. Fans beg for more action like this . . . DAVID and KEVIN VON ERICH, the Texas state tag team champions, have expressed a strong desire to wrestle STEVE KEIRN and MIKE GRAHAM . . . Do you recall that DUSTY RHODES wanted fans to be nice to KILLER KARL KOX? Well, Dusty has given up this hopeless quest and told his fans that they can go back to booing Kox whenever they see him. Dusty explains, "I tried to be nice to the guy, so did the fans. It did absolutely nothing. The guy is a lost cause!"

That's all for now. See you next month! □



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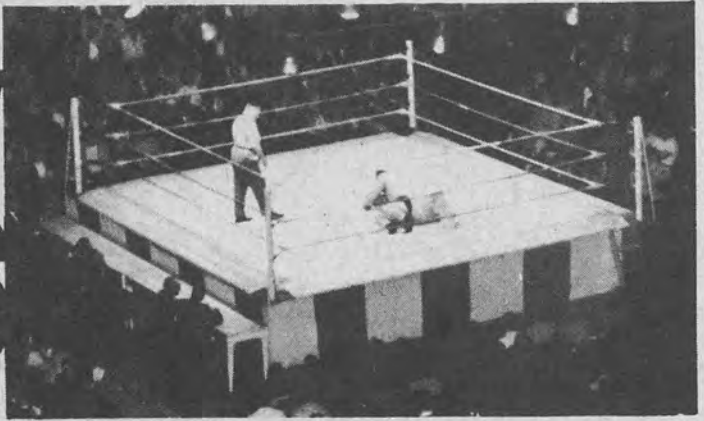
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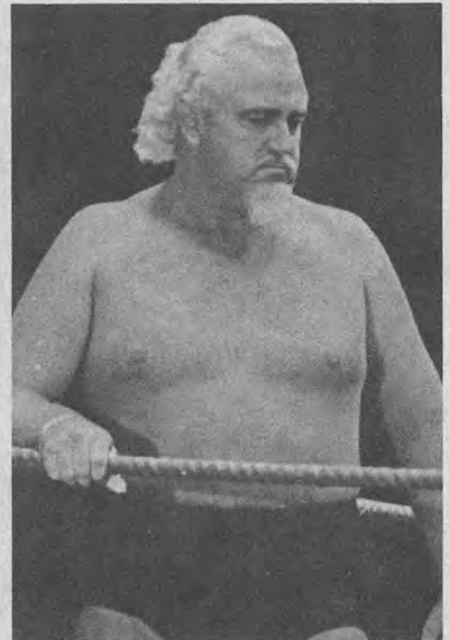
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TWO BIG SISSIES DISGUSTS HIM

I am thoroughly disgusted with those two big sissies. The two I am talking about are the Graham brothers, Superbum and Crazy Luke. It's bad enough that nut is allowed to wrestle, but poor Crazy Luke has to get his brother's help in about all his matches.

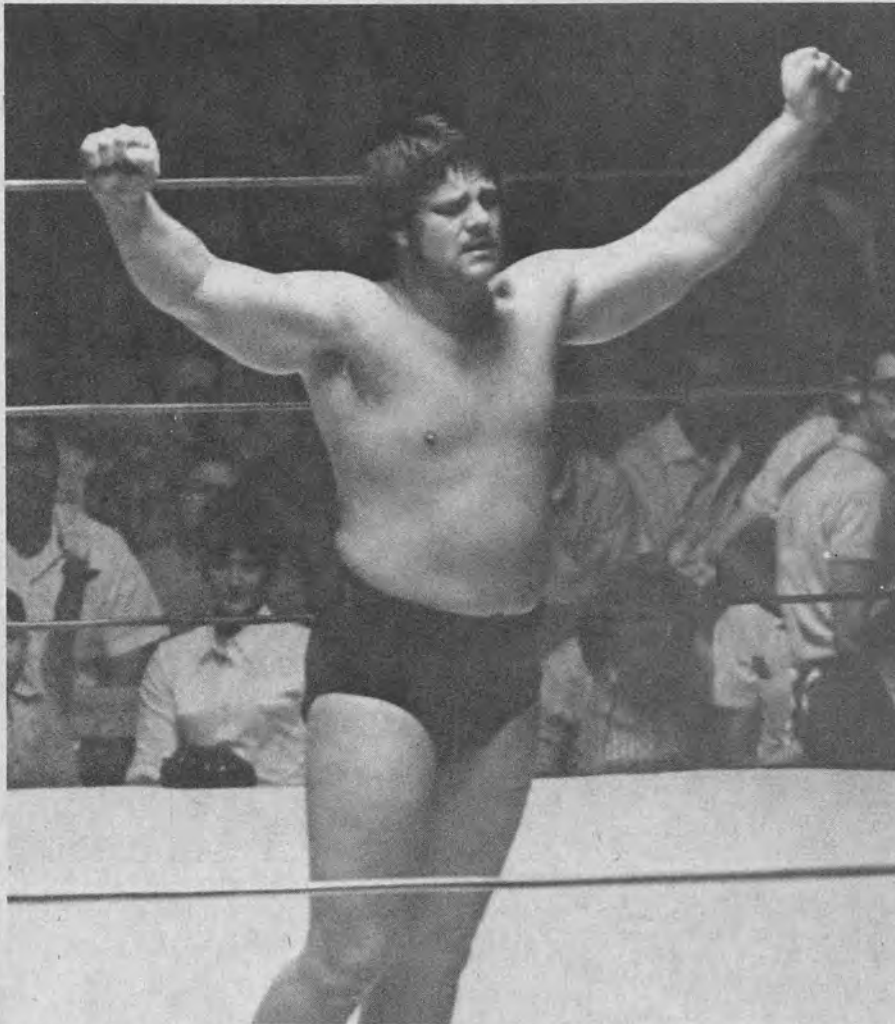
That proves one thing to us wrestling fans: not only is Luke



"Crazy" Luke Graham utilizes the help of half brother Superstar Graham. This must be stopped now!

Crazy, but he's a big sissy. That man, if I may call him that, is a disgrace and as sickening as his brother. Haystacks could have soundly whipped Luke, but Crazy Man had to be assisted by his

(Continued on page 58)



What a great man Blackjack Mulligan has turned out to be. The fans are crazy about him. You can bet that Ric Flair, Greg Valentine, and Baron Von Raschke don't share the fans' feeling one bit!

SUPPORT BLACKJACK

All I want to say is that I was touched by Blackjack Mulligan's story in the September 1978 issue of *INSIDE WRESTLING*. We fans in the Mid-Atlantic area are proud to have a man like Mulligan beating up such vermin as Ric Flair, Cyclone Negro, and Masked Superstar, to

name just a few.

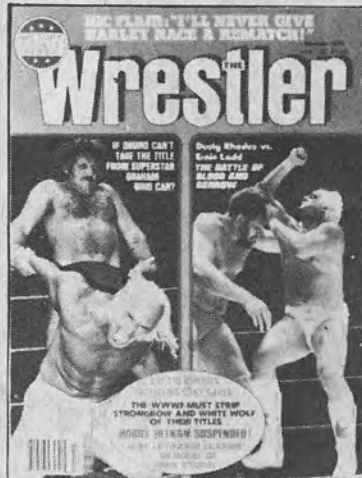
Reading the article was like listening to a converted Christian confess in front of the congregation. I hope all readers of this magazine will support Blackjack in everything he does. He needs the support.

JOHN HARDIN
Kings Mountain, N.C.

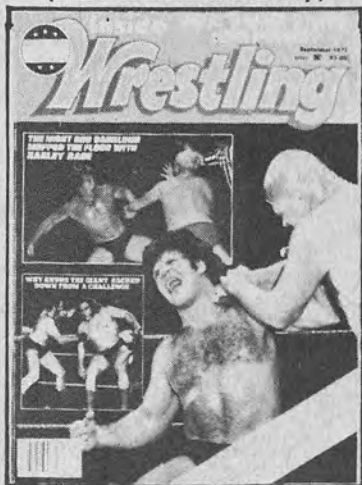
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HOTSEAT

BOB BACKLUND: "SOMETIMES I THINK THE TITLE WILL KILL ME"

H E'S YOUNG, BRIGHT, SKILLED, and the WWF champion. His rise to fame has been phenomenal. The future promises decades more of superb scientific wrestling, as good as anyone in the sport. He's a man of limitless potential, a golden warrior blessed by the gods. He's Bob Backlund.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY MATT BROCK

- Q:** Welcome to the HOTSEAT, Bob.
- A:** It's a pleasure, Mr. Brock. I've been reading your reports since I was a little kid.
- Q:** Thanks. We all like to hear things like that in the twilight of our careers. But we're here to talk about you. Is the reality of being champion anything like you imagined it to be.
- A:** It's funny, but the night after I won the title, I realized I never imagined *being* champion.

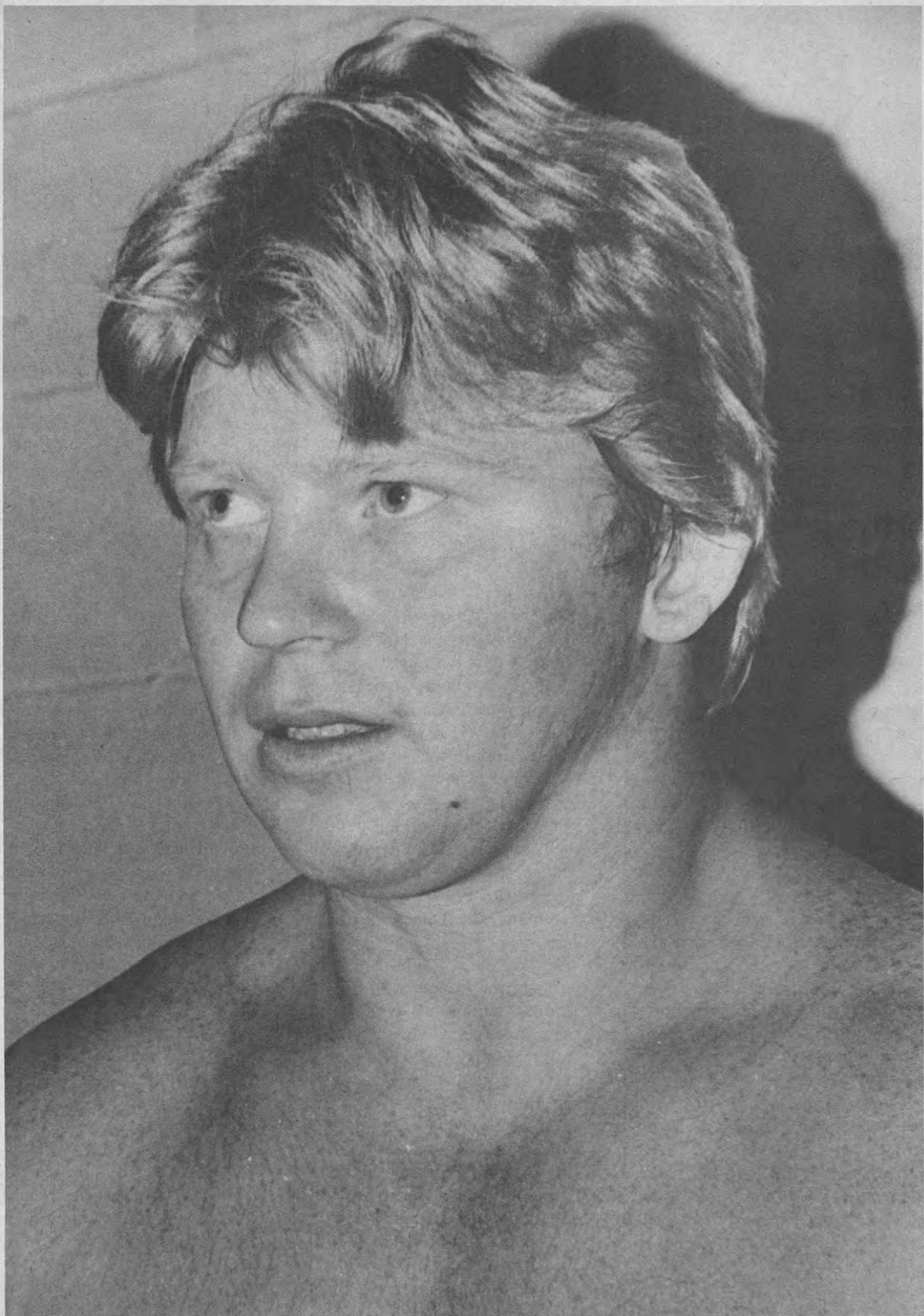
- My daydreams always stopped at winning the title. I never thought about having to defend it. I didn't know what I was supposed to do. Does that sound strange?
- Q:** Not really. Most champions say the same thing. Until

"I used to talk about how I'd be this kind of champion, or that kind of champion. I believed it too. But as I was saying it, it never seemed real."

- winning it, a championship is thought of as a prize to win, not as a prize to keep.
- A:** I used to talk about how I'd be this kind of champion, or that kind of champion. I believed

it, too. But as I was saying it, it never seemed real. Do you know what I mean?

- Q:** Do you want to hear my Nobel Prize acceptance speech? I know exactly what you mean. But of course, your dream came true.
- A:** When it comes true, everything is different.
- Q:** In what way?
- A:** First, I had to realize my limits. I couldn't be everywhere at once. My schedule has to be carefully thought out, nothing left to chance. After promising and believing my fans have a right to see me, I then realized they had a right to see me at my best. That meant along with all my appearances, I needed rest, training, and some time off to keep fresh. Until I started defending my title, I didn't realize how difficult that would be. I've had to grow up very fast.
- Q:** Have you enjoyed the





"I enjoy a challenge, so I guess I've been enjoying this. But it's so much harder than anything else I've ever done. There are nights I can't sleep, just sit at my desk and devise strategies."

experience?

A: I enjoy a challenge, so I guess I've been enjoying this. But it's so much harder than anything else I've ever done. There are nights I can't sleep, just sit at my desk and devise strategies. Everything becomes so important. Each match is for the championship. I've aged a lot. I've been humbled by success. I don't now if you can say that's enjoyable.

Q: For some people, it can be pretty frightening.

A: I can understand that. There are nights, after a tough match, when I sit in the locker room for hours afterwards, thinking, "This is going to kill me!" I feel alone and lost. But that feeling passes. When it hits, I know it's going to pass. But that doesn't make it feel



Bob is crowned the new WWF champion (above) the night he upset Superstar Graham in the huge sports complex to win the title. A title vs. title confrontation with Bob defending against NWA champion Harley Race (right).

any better.

Q: I have the same feeling when I face a blank page. The feeling doesn't pass with age.

A: Nobody can help you because nobody really knows what it feels like. I never realized the champion was so alone.

Q: It's rough when your dreams come true.

A: I'm not feeling sorry for myself, understand. I wouldn't change places with anyone in the world. But it's weird that so many guys want the title, and none of them realize what it's like. There ought to be an orientation course for champions, telling us what we should expect. This on-the-job training could kill a guy.

Q: Is it getting any easier as you go along?

A: Not really. The championship is so special, so important, that each match becomes special. There are no easy matches when you're champion. There's no room for error.

Q: Have you been wrestling more cautiously since



becoming champion?

A: Not really. I do what I have to do to win. If it calls for being cautious, I'm cautious. If it calls for being a little wild, because that would confuse my opponent, I'm a little wild. I'm not reckless, ever. That's what I miss most, I guess. The freedom to experiment, to fail, champions don't have that. I once read Jack Brisco said owning a title is like wrestling in a straitjacket. I understand what he means now.

Q: Have you considered what might happen if you lose the title?

A: No.

Q: Never?

A: I've had nightmares about it, but I've given it much conscious thought. I once asked Brisco about that, what it's like to no longer have the title. He told me not to think about it. I haven't had any desire to think about losing.

Q: Do you think about the future at all?



Mr. Fuji is on the wrong end of Backlund's expertly applied armlock (above). Bob is on the verge of passing out (below) due to Ken Patera's great strength. Somehow Bob was able to survive.

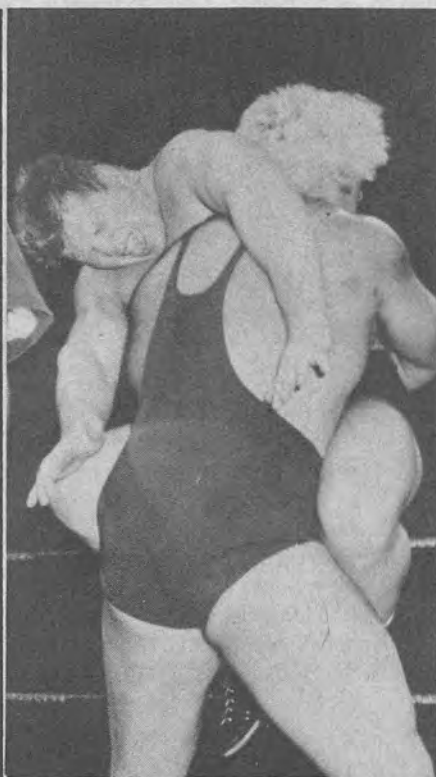
A: Not past my next match.

Q: When it's all over, is there any way you'd like history to look at your title reign?

A: It may sound corny, but I'd be happy if they said I always did my best. I don't want to be a hero. I just want to be the greatest wrestler I can be. There's no shame having someone be a better wrestler than me. The shame would be if I wasn't as good as I could be.

Q: Are there any opponents you especially want to beat?

A: I want to beat everybody. Let me change that: I want to beat my next opponent. I don't hate anybody or anything like that. Champions can't afford to get into feuds. There's enough pressure just being



"It may sound corny, but I'd be happy if they said I always did my best. I don't want to be a hero. I just want to be the greatest wrestler I can be."

champion. I don't need the added pressure of vengeance.

Q: That's a pretty mature attitude.

A: I've been growing up lately.

Q: Do you still have the same friends?

A: You know the answer to that one, don't you? That's why you asked. I still have the same friends, but they're not as close any more. No one's close. Nobody can understand what I'm going through. Most of my friends are just starting careers. I'm already at the pinnacle.

Q: Most champions feel that way. Not many admit it, though. That's about it for the interview, unless you'd like to add something.

A: No. I don't think I could make people understand, anyway. □

NEWS FROM THE

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

ST. LOUIS, MO.

By David Lutkins



**BRUISER
vs.
DICK MURDOCH**



Bruiser captured the Missouri state title from Dick Murdoch after a wild match. Bruiser utilized his famous stomach claw to wear Murdoch down, then implemented an atomic drop and second claw for the victory and belt.

OTHER BOUTS: Pat O'Connor and Rocky Johnson stopped Buck Robley and "Bruiser" Bob Sweetan . . . Jerry Brisco overwhelmed Blackjack Lanza . . . Tank Patton and Ted DiBiase drew.

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y.

By Jim Poullos



**CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
vs.
GEORGE STEELE**



The feature match was Chief Jay Strongbow against George "The Animal" Steele. Steele repeatedly used foreign objects and threw a chair into the ring, for which he was disqualified.

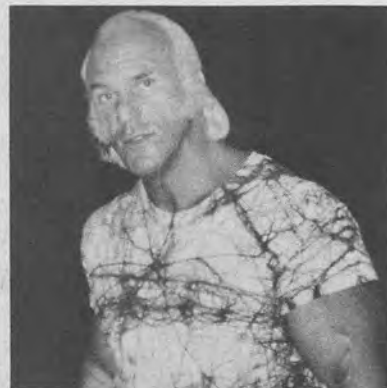
OTHER BOUTS: Spiros Arion and Tony Garea drew . . . Luke Graham triumphed over Dominic DeNucci . . . Dino Bravo stopped Stan Stasiak . . . Johnny Rodz licked Jimmy Raye.

BOSTON, MASS.

By Gerard DeViller



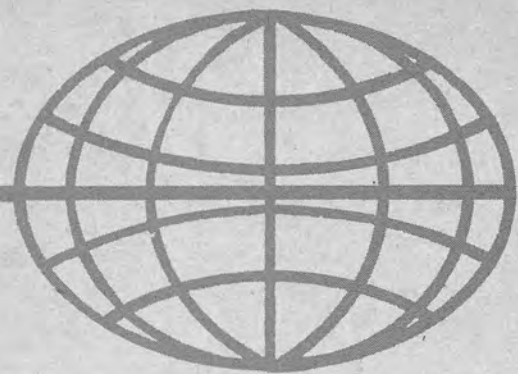
**BOB BACKLUND
vs.
SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM**



Once again, Superstar Billy Graham had challenged WWWF champ Bob Backlund in an attempt to regain his belt. This time, both wrestlers went berserk and were disqualified.

OTHER BOUTS: The Lumberjacks held off Gorilla Monsoon and Tony Garea . . . George Steele whipped S.D. Jones . . . Dino Bravo was triumphant over the vicious Butcher Vachon.

WRESTLING CAPITALS



TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

By Brett Newman



**DUSTY RHODES
vs.
BOBBY DUNCUM**



A bunkhouse match between Dusty Rhodes and Bobby Duncum was the sensational main event. Duncum took the early advantage by using a foreign object, but Dusty overcame that to win.

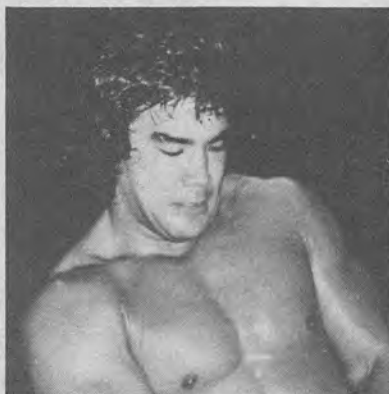
OTHER BOUTS: Wahoo McDaniel won by disqualification over the Masked Spoiler . . . Paul Ellering overwhelmed Sir Winston . . . Tiger Conway Jr. was victorious over Pete Austin.

GREENSBORO, N.C.

By Horace Terry Jr.



**RIC FLAIR
vs.
RICK STEAMBOAT**



Using a piledriver, Ric Flair retained his U.S. heavyweight title against challenger Rick Steamboat after a grueling 27 minute war at the Greensboro Coliseum.

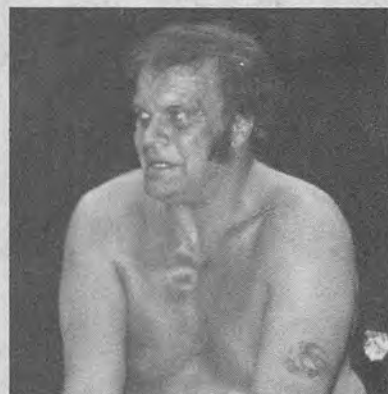
OTHER BOUTS: Blackjack Mulligan won a Texas Death Match against The Superstar . . . Johnny Weaver and Mr. Wrestling stopped Cyclone Negro and Jacques Goulet.

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.

By Tommy Ziel

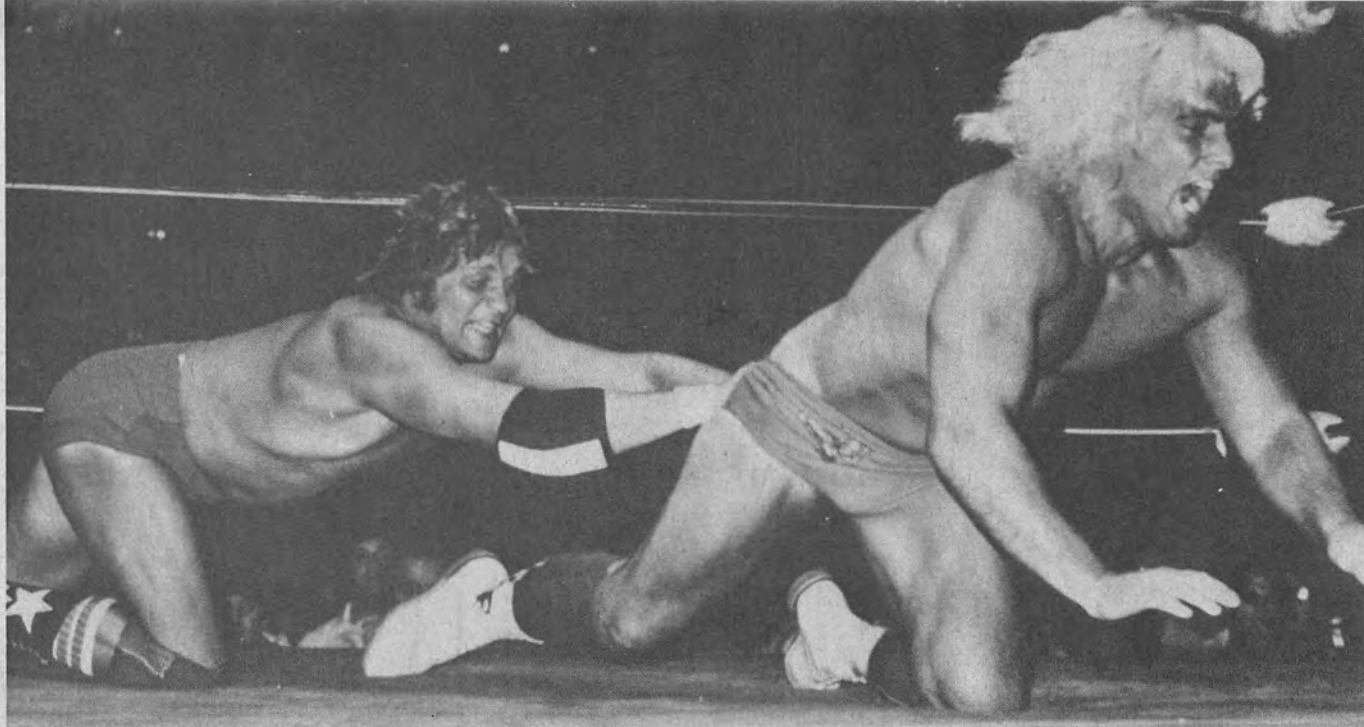


**DINO BRAVO
vs.
STAN STASIAK**

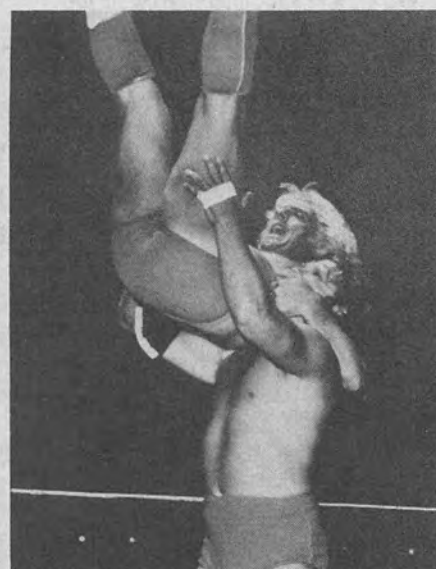
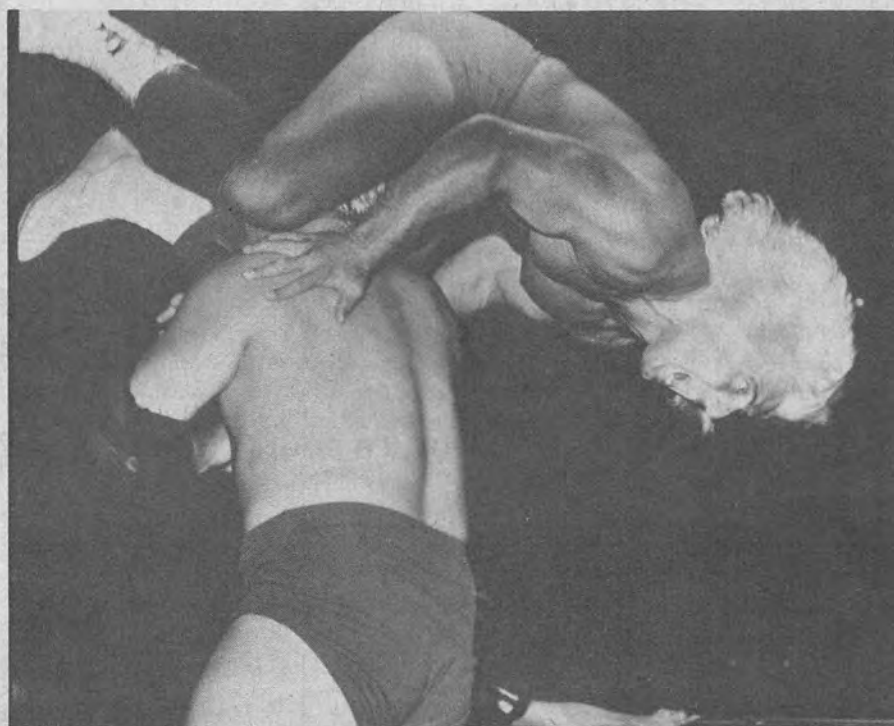


It took Dino Bravo only seven-and-a-half minutes to stop the taunting villainy of Stan Stasiak. Bravo wrestled brilliantly in his win.

OTHER BOUTS: Tony Garea was disqualified against Superstar Graham . . . "Crazy" Luke Graham fell before Bob Backlund . . . S.D. Jones thumped Butcher Vachon. □



Dick Slater vs. Ric Flair **THE MATCH** **THAT NEVER**



Top of page: It's Slater trying to haul Flair back by the seat of his pants! Left: Stan Hansen backdrops Ric. Above: Slater's spinebreaker is ready for Ric.

IT'S A DAMN shame that they had to meet like this, with so many questions remaining to be answered, with a result that is merely a statistic in the wrestling record book.

For some time now, a match between Ric Flair and Dick Slater has been the most hotly speculated bout in wrestling. Flair has attacked nearly every top contender. Except for Dick Slater.

Why?

"We're afraid that someone might get killed," said a promoter. "You know, this is just a sport, it's not the Normandy invasion. If we ever paired Slater and Flair, with all their hatred, you can bet that someone would be laid up in the hospital for six months. That is, if they're not carried out in a pine box."

So, this match has been avoided. No promoter has had the courage, or perhaps, intelligence, to schedule these two men. However, the beginnings of a Flair-Slater

It was just a matter of time before, through the many changes of a tag team match, they would square off against each other. And show the wrestling world why promoters have been reluctant to match them up.

Slater had met Abdullah and emerged with about a pint of blood missing from his body. Bleeding profusely, Dick was ferociously attacking Abdullah when the hated Butcher tagged Flair.

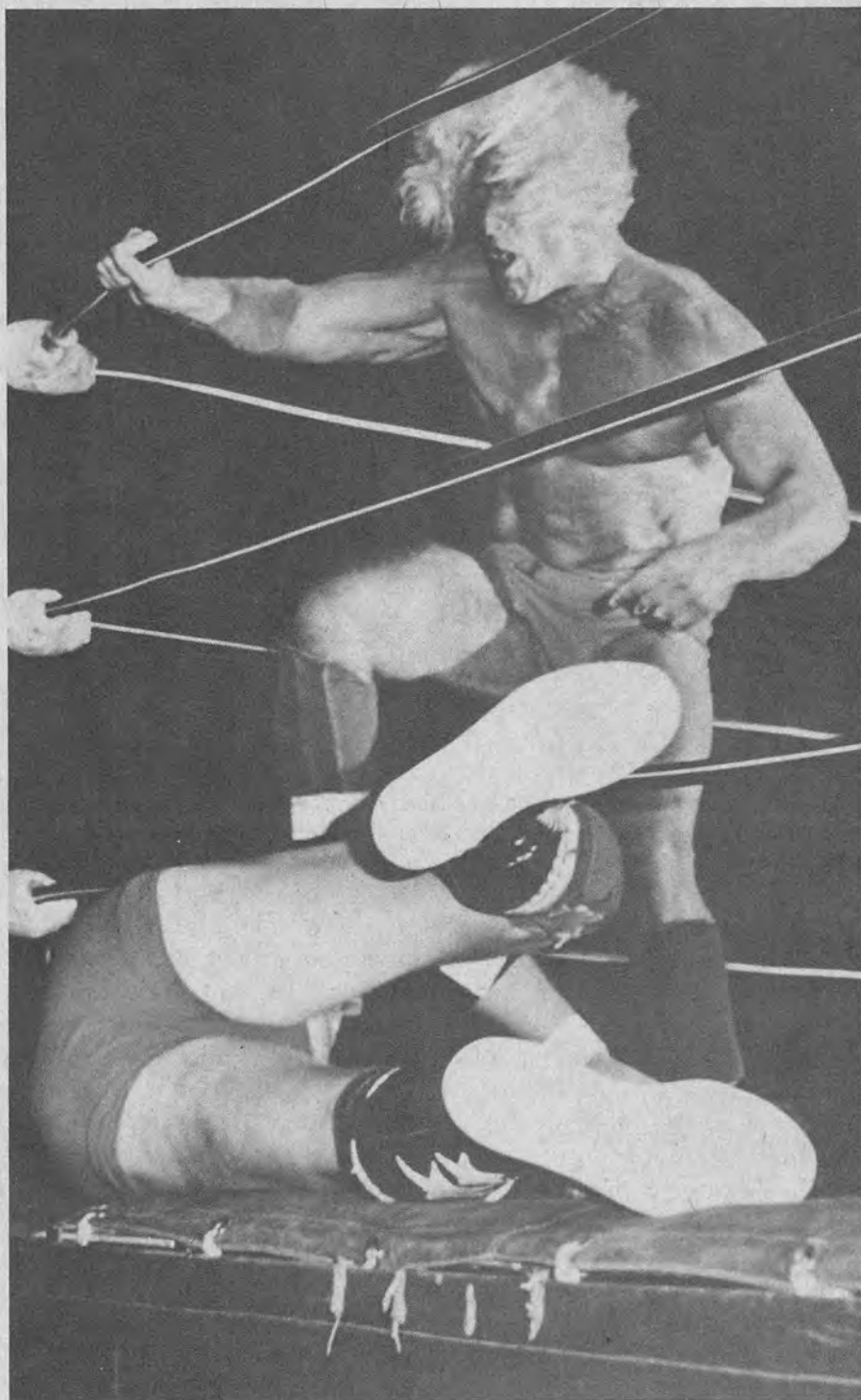
A gasp exploded from the crowd

WAS

match occurred during a tag team match.

It was Ric Flair and Abdullah the Butcher against Dick Slater and Stan Hansen. Flair and Slater warily eyed each other, their lips quivering tensely.

Savagely, Ric Flair stomps Dick Slater in one of the few moments they grappled during a wild tag team match.



PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

Ric Flair wants to wrestle Dick Slater. Dick Slater wants to wrestle Ric Flair. Yes—they are prepared to battle to the death if necessary. Now read the shocking truth behind the match no promoter dare make!



United States heavyweight champion Ric Flair struts around the ring and displays one of his many custom made robes. Flair and Slater must be signed by some promoter so they can square off already.

as Flair leaped into the ring and grinned at Slater. That was it. This was what everyone had been waiting for.

Flair and Slater attacked each other like frenzied water buffalos. They immediately enmeshed in a choking series of maneuvers, fingers clawing to produce pain, mouths convulsing with animalistic ferocity, eyes squinting through the rivers of blood pouring into their faces.

It was unlike any match anyone had ever seen.

"I've been covering wrestling for nearly 20 years and I've never seen two men go at it like these two," said a Georgia wrestling writer.

"I don't blame the promoters for not scheduling this as an individual match."

For a very long while after the match, both men had difficulty speaking. Flair laid on his dressing room table, eyes glazed, leg bent, hands supine at his sides. Finally, he leaned on his elbows and talked.

"I hate that slimy SOB's stinkin' guts and I'm proud to say that," Flair said weakly. "I wanted nothin' better then to smash his ugly face and make him bleed and see him cry.

"I hate him, but he's a coward. I tried to get a match set up but he was afraid, always offering this excuse and that excuse.

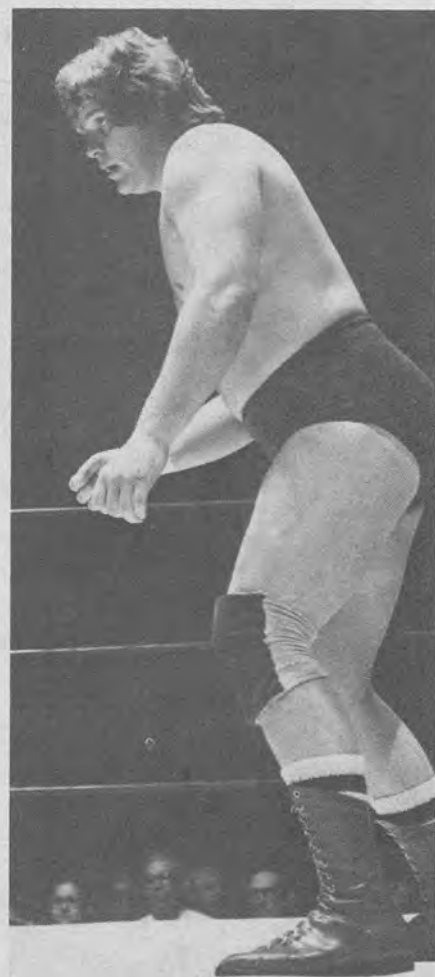
"Then one time I called his home and asked him if he'd like to meet me in a gym, nothing official, just the two of us going and trying to kill each other. He said he had other commitments. He's a lousy

crawling coward!"

From within the caked, whitened lips, a wan smile appeared on Dick Slater's bruised face when he was informed of Flair's tirade.

"Coward? He's the one who has to use disgusting rulebreaker tricks," Slater said. "I wrestle legally. That man is a deranged animal. I'm a coward, huh? He wouldn't know what it was like to really wrestle.

"I've been the one pushing for an individual match," Slater continued "Ask anyone. I want to wrestle him, and I don't care about



Love him or hate him, you must admit that the unpredictable Dick Slater is a man Flair must contend with soon.

a time-limit. I'll go for 10 years if I have to. He's afraid of me. Well, it'll happen someday. A tag team match just isn't enough. Ric Flair is still alive. I aim to change that someday." □

INSIDE WRESTLING

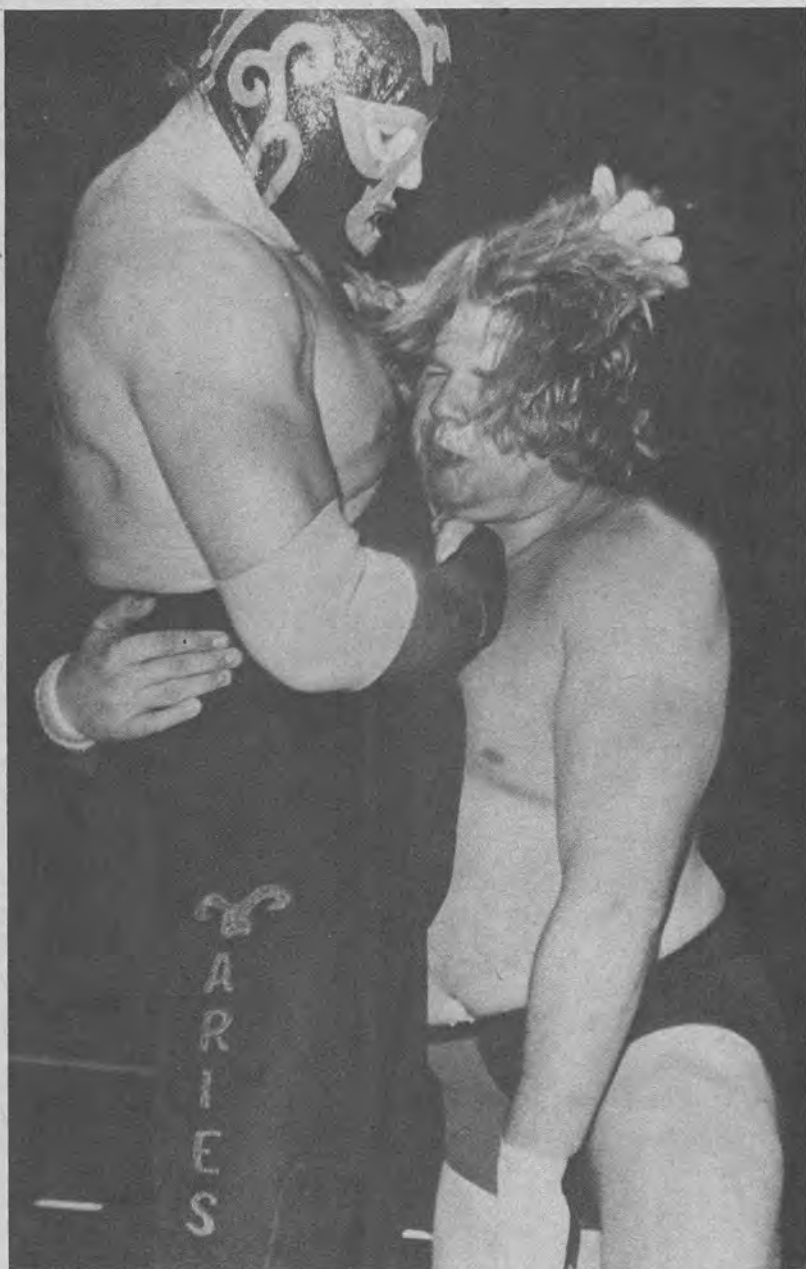
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capsule profile

THE SPOILER



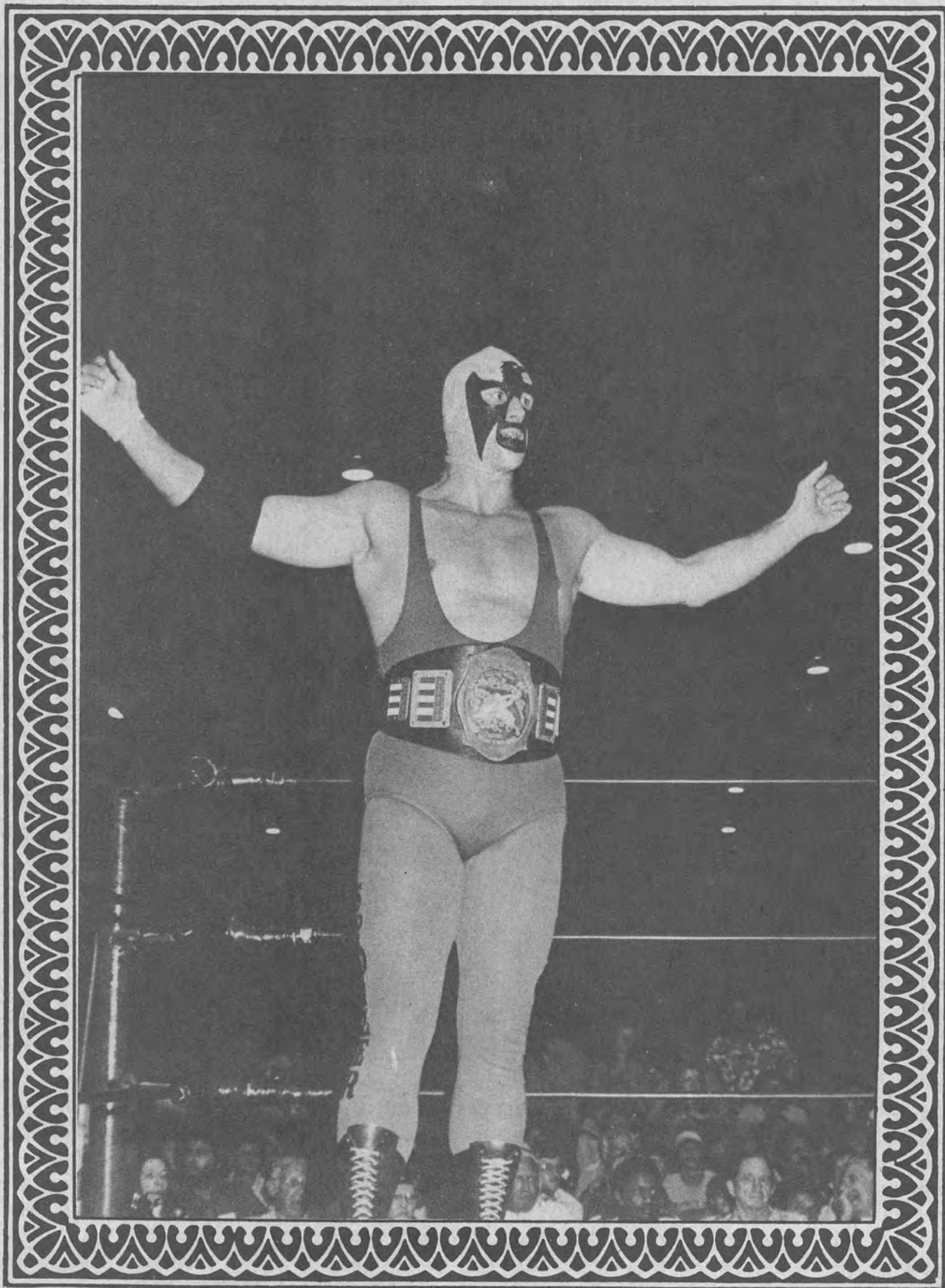
UNDoubtedly, the most mysterious wrestler alive . . . Absolutely nothing is really known about him, though many persons have speculated about his past (*"It's no one's god-damned business who I am or where I come from"*) . . . Some long-time observers believe he has a criminal past . . . Others feel he has some horrible facial disfiguration . . . Even his weight is not known (*"I weigh what I weight. What's it matter to anyone? Who the hell are people to question me!"*) . . . Is a master of the clawhold . . . Perhaps the most ruthless wrestler ever to step inside a squared



circle (*"They're my enemy. In war you kill the enemy. In the ring you do the same"*) . . . Has no friends (*"Friends get in the way. Who needs 'em?"*) . . . Even among the tightly-knit masked wrestlers fraternity, he is viewed with scornful disdain . . . No one has ever seen him eat a

meal or take a drink of water (*"I do. What is it, a big production? And if I don't eat or drink, I don't. No one's business."*) . . . Laughs at the sight of an opponent's blood . . . Suspected of using poison beneath his fingernails (*"I'll survive any way I can"*). □

CAPSULE PROFILE PINUP



THE SPOILER

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each day, out of the thousands of letters we receive, hundreds of them are from fans asking the whereabouts of their favorite wrestler. In this special column, we will try to answer the questions you ask the most!



SONNY KING

The popular "Showboat" King, who once held the WWWF tag team title with Chief Jay Strongbow, is now active in Georgia. Sonny left the WWWF a few years ago in search of strictly scientific bouts. With rulebreakers like Angelo Mosca, Abdullah the Butcher, and Sheik also in Georgia, Sonny should be in for a lot of wild brawls.

DOUG GILBERT

Doug "Gashouse" Gilbert, perhaps the most versatile rulebreaker in the sport, is accepting a few matches in the Tennessee area. Although he generally uses a vicious ring style, Gilbert's flying maneuvers and overall agility have won him many fans. Many feel if Doug would become a scientific wrestler, he could win a world belt.



MIGHTY IGOR

This Polish fan favorite has left the Mid-Atlantic region to sign a short-term contract with AWA promoters. Igor promises his Mid-Atlantic fans he will return if they need him. Igor's brutal wars against Ric Flair, Greg Valentine, Masked Superstar and other rulebreakers are legendary.

THE SHEIK

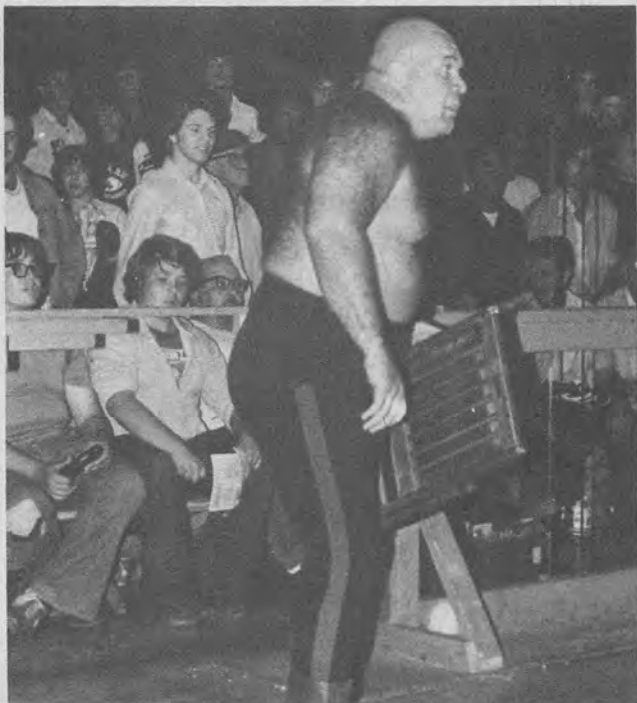
This most hated of villains remains the top attraction in Detroit rings. However, he has also signed for matches in both Georgia and Texas. If Sheik continues true to form, he will be the most hated wrestler in any area in which he appears. The Sheik's Southern reign of terror has begun.



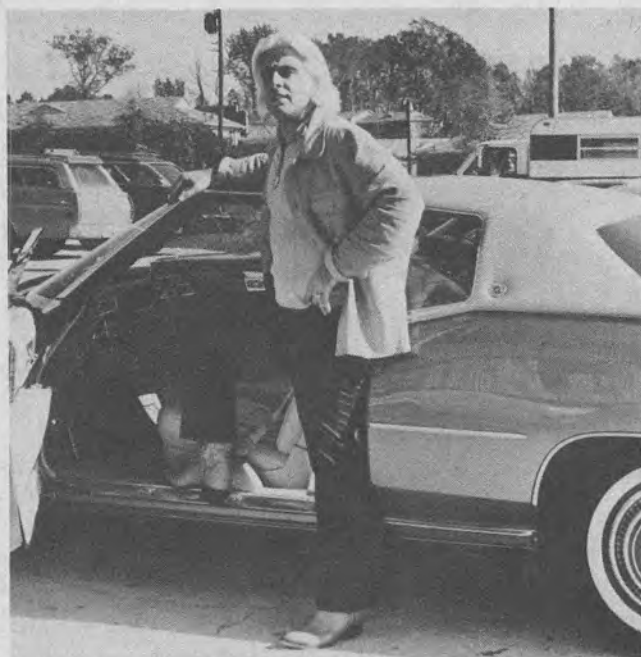


Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

NEW YORK: I find that the antiseptic Madison Square Garden sickens me. It has no blemishes, no scars, nothing to invest it with an air of reality. Just the unbroken sterility. At least the wrestlers add some realism to it. Saw one of my favorite people, George "The Animal" Steele, wrestle Backlund for the WWWF belt. I've never had any trouble communicating with Steele. Something about people with the intelligence of a cabbage and a green tongue which reminds me of my boyhood. Had a friend named Warren when I was a kid.



GEORGE "THE ANIMAL" STEELE



RIC FLAIR

Guy couldn't talk, used to chew on his glasses. So, I become a writer and he's a corporate lawyer making ninety grand. Anyway, Backlund beat George. Too bad. It might be interesting to see Steele as champion.

CHARLOTTE: "Hello, how are you." That question, along with, have a nice day, are the passwords of the South. As well as fine food, gentility and a pace of life that a cup of sand would feel comfortable in. Speaking of sand, I decided I'd like to see Ric Flair buried up to his head in sand. Flair does to me what no amount of bad chili can do. I saw him attack Paul Jones with a sadism I have

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

never seen in professional wrestling. His barbaric inhumanity is a disgrace and I refuse to speak to him anymore. His disgusting self-serving remarks only lower the caliber of the sport and I won't have anything to do with him anymore.

ATLANTA: One of the really unique personalities in a sport of unique personalities is Abdullah the Butcher. I had a pleasant evening talking to Abdullah through his interpreter, some guy with a turban and a camel-shaped pipe. We talked for about an hour before Abdullah's bloody match with Mr. Wrestling II. Abdullah told me that he won't be happy until he has been thrown out of every arena in the country. He also said that he feels he stands up for the ugly and mean people of the world, that they need a spokesman. Furthermore, Abdullah insisted that he has been given bad press and that he has been portrayed as a deranged animal, when, in fact, he has been consistently provoked by opponents and been the object of discrimination because he's from The Sudan. He grinned when I asked about the dread Flohiden. To learn what's behind that would be a scoop.

MIAMI: Fell asleep in the sun and got sun poisoning. Nice way to start the day. Seems like I'm running into all the looneys this time around. Met Killer Karl Kox, who is definitely not all there. I asked him why he went berserk in arenas and attacked photographers. He insisted that he hated having his picture taken and didn't feel he should have to allow it. End of conversation. Why isn't Jerry



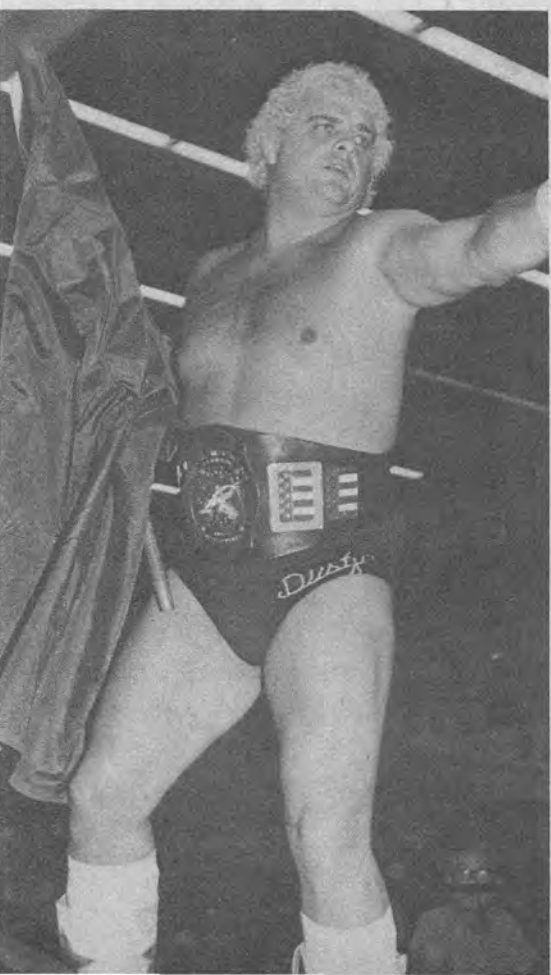
ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER

Brisco champion? Guy is brilliant. Watched him the other night and came away convinced he'll be champ in a year.

MINNEAPOLIS: Quite a change of pace coming from blazing hot Miami to always cool Minnesota. Maybe I'll get to do some fishing in the Land of a Thousand Lakes. Been looking into all the rumors surrounding Verne Gagne. Guy has been accused of more conspiracies than the Russians. To set the record straight, I found that most of the rumors originated from Bobby Heenan. A couple were started by Nick Bockwinkel. Then I found out that Bob Orton Jr. is the prime instigator behind this smear-Gagne campaign. Told Verne all this and he smiled tightly and promised to stop these vicious rumors once and for all. You figure out how he'll do it. I'm going fishing. □

Now you can have an official membership card in Dusty Rhodes' army and it is absolutely free! And don't forget, when you get your card make sure you hold it up at the arena and let Dusty and everyone else know you are 100 percent behind the "American Dream!"

GET A MEMBERSHIP IN DUSTY'S



SOME WRESTLERS, when they reach a certain stage of popularity, forget the millions of loyal supporters who believed and encouraged them when they first started their careers.

Those men earn only the contempt of Dusty Rhodes. For Dusty knows what it's like to have people screaming for him. And Dusty appreciates that.

And that's why Dusty has decided to form Dusty's Army.

"I hate those guys who turn their backs on the fans," Dusty said. "Who do these dudes think pay their salaries? Without the fans, baby, we'd all be back home playing solitaire.

"No, the single most important part of professional wrestling is the fans. They make the sport. They go to the matches and they watch it on television, they buy all the fine magazines. They *are* wrestling, baby.

"I once got into a shouting match with this wrestler, not a rulebreaker, either. He started bad-mouthing the fans. Well, let me tell you, if it wasn't for someone else stepping between us, it would have turned into something a little more than just yelling and screaming at each other. I don't like anyone talking bad about my family or the fans. Those two things'll get someone's head opened quicker than lightning."

In accordance with Dusty's long-standing relationship with wrestling fans, he has decided to use *INSIDE WRESTLING* as a voice for his newest venture.

"It's gonna be my own personal army," Dusty grinned. "Wherever I go I'm gonna have my legions organized into a well-disciplined army.

"I want my fans to wave "Dusty's Army" cards wherever



I go. I want to be a wrestlin' with a bad dude and when you start to wonder if you're gonna make it through the match, I want to hear the screams and the yells of my name and then be able to look up and see all the fans waving their cards. That's what I want. I mean, I'm the greatest now, think how I'll be when I get my army rolling."

To get a free membership card in Dusty's Army, fans must send in the entry blank on page 35 and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Now, you must enclose this *self-addressed, stamped* envelope if you want to receive a

(Continued on page 52)

CARD ARMY!!!

**"Please enroll me as a member
of "Dusty's Army."**

NAME: _____

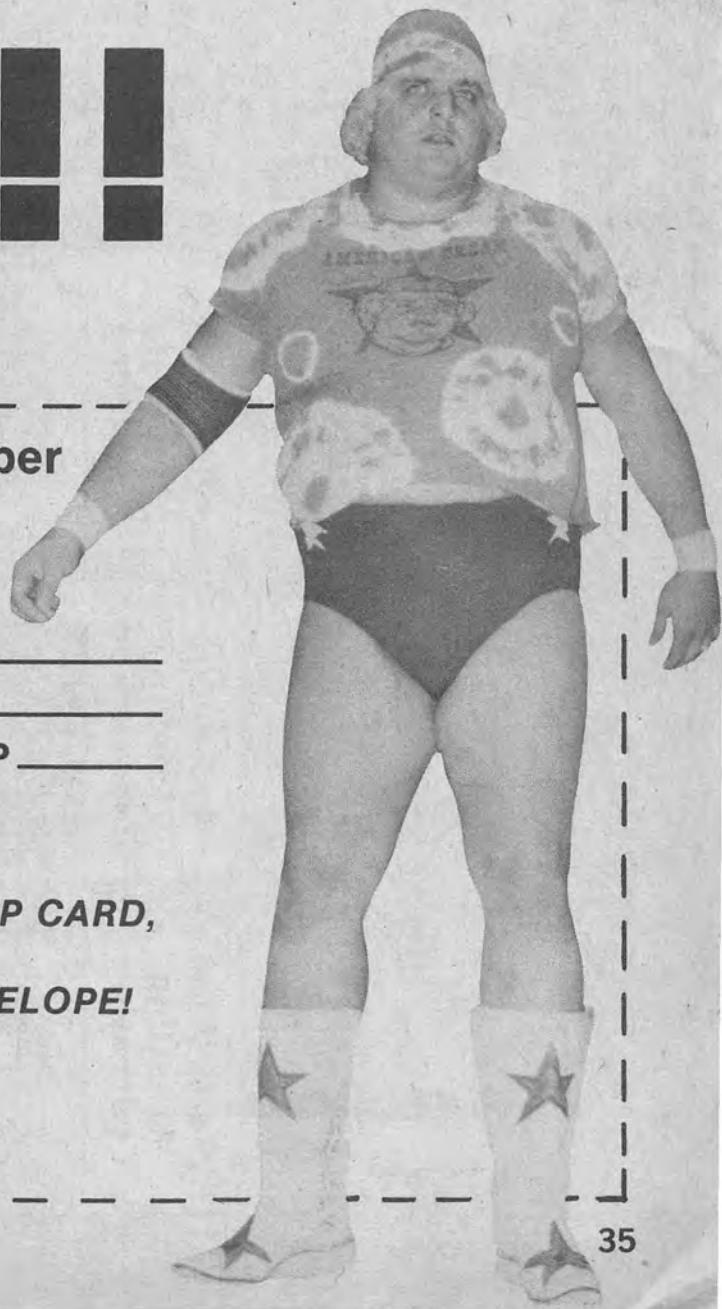
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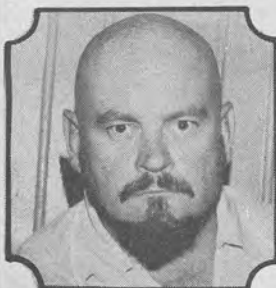
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These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
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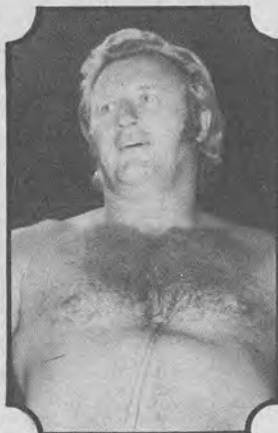


Champion:
BOB BACKLUND

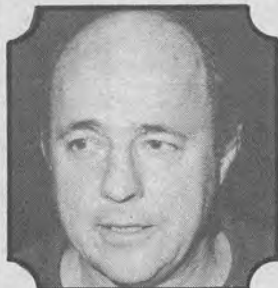


1—IVAN KOLOFF

American Wrestling Association

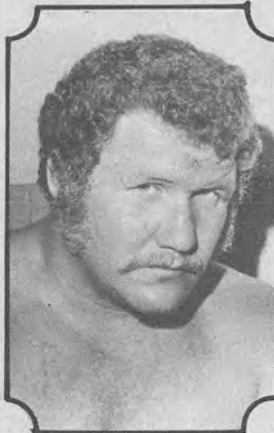


Champion: Nick
BOCKWINKLE



1—VERNE GAGNE

National Wrestling Alliance

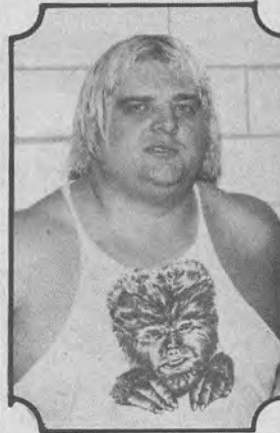


Champion:
HARLEY RACE



1—DUSTY RHODES

Most Popular Wrestlers



1—DUSTY RHODES

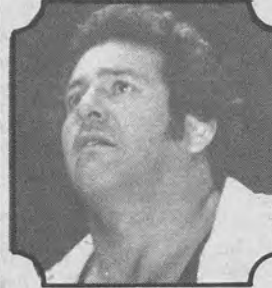


2—ANDRE
THE GIANT

Most Hated Wrestlers

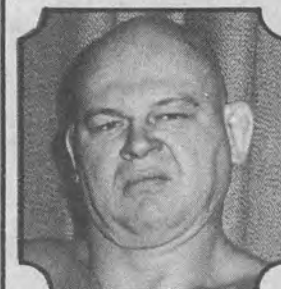


1—RIC FLAIR

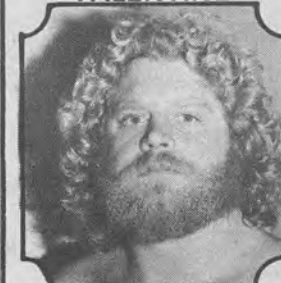


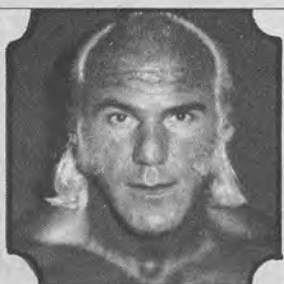
2—KEN PATERA

Tag Teams



1—BARON VON
RASCHKE & GREG
VALENTINE

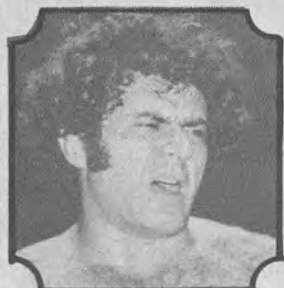




2—SUPERSTAR
GRAHAM



3—DUSTY RHODES



4—SPIROS ARION

5—VICTOR RIVERA
6—DINO BRAVO
7—ERNIE LADD
8—IVAN PUTSKI
9—CRAZY LUKE
GRAHAM
10—SUPER
DESTROYER



2—BILLY ROBINSON

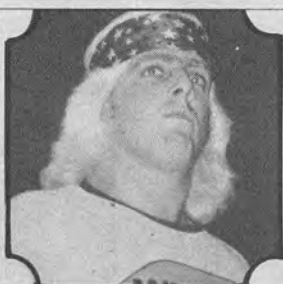


3—RUFUS R. JONES



4—LARRY HENNIG

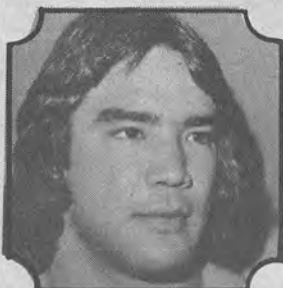
5—RAY STEVENS
6—BOB ORTON JR.
7—GREG GAGNE
8—BLACKJACK
LANZA
9—JIM BRUNZELL
10—PAT PATTERSON



2—RIC FLAIR

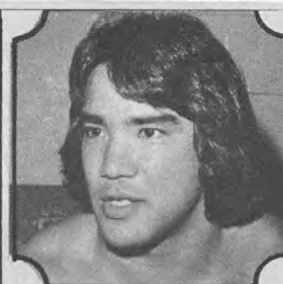


3—JACK BRISCO

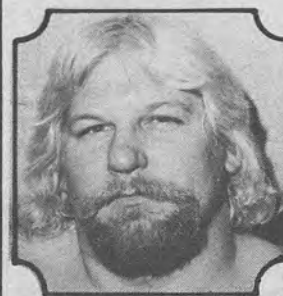


4—RICK
STEAMBOAT

5—KEN PATERA
6—ANGELO MOSCA
7—DICK SLATER
8—BRUISER
9—THE SPOILER
10—MR. WRESTLING
II



3—RICK
STEAMBOAT

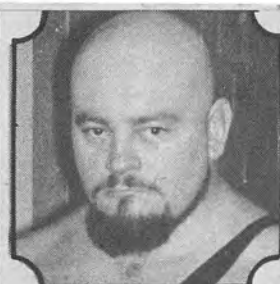


4—STAN HANSEN

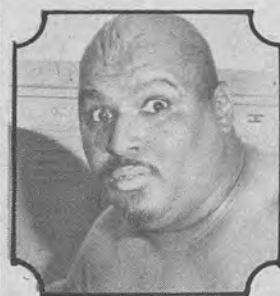


5—WAHOO
McDANIEL

6—JACK BRISCO
7—PAUL JONES
8—BOB BACKLUND
9—MR. WRESTLING
II
10—GREG GAGNE



3—IVAN KOLOFF

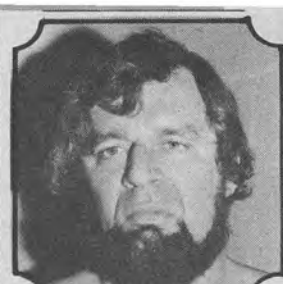


4—ABDULLAH
THE BUTCHER

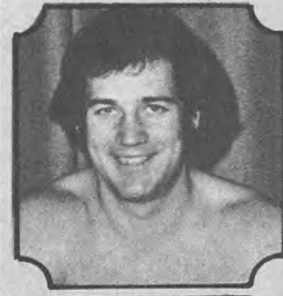


5—SPOILER I

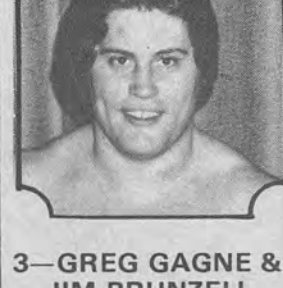
6—SPIROS ARION
7—CRAZY LUKE
GRAHAM
8—GREG
VALENTINE
9—BRUISER
BRODIE
10—VICTOR RIVERA



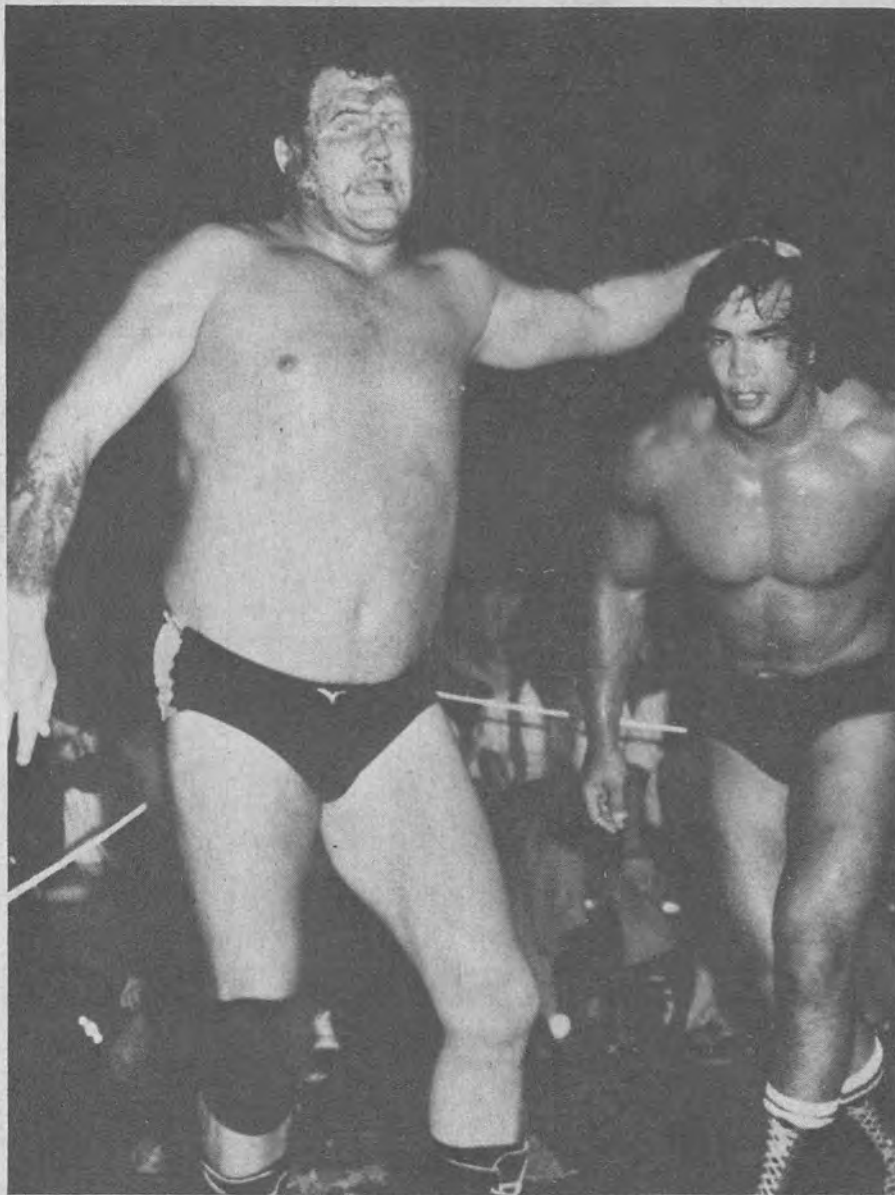
2—THE
LUMBERJACKS



3—GREG GAGNE &
JIM BRUNZELL



4—MR. SATO &
MR. SAITO
5—RICK STEAM-
BOAT & PAUL JONES
6—JACK & JERRY
BRISCO
7—OLE ANDERSON
& IVAN KOLOFF
8—MIKE GRAHAM
& STEVE KEIRN
9—KEVIN & DAVID
VON ERICH
10—LUKE & SUPER-
STAR GRAHAM



Action outside the ring as Race resorts to the most illegal tactics one can think of—bashing Rick's head into the guardposts.

IS NOTHING SACRED anymore?

Certainly, there is no reason to believe that the word of Harley Race is worth much. But he did give his word. He did agree.

He shouldn't be NWA champion because of that.

This is why. Rick Steamboat and Race wrestled for the NWA belt. After a grueling and particularly vicious match, the one-hour time limit fell upon the two men, causing another draw.

Steamboat, infuriated by Race's repeated rulebreaker tactics, grabbed the microphone and offered a way to resolve the match.

"Let's go for five minutes more," he bellowed out to the screaming, appreciative crowd.

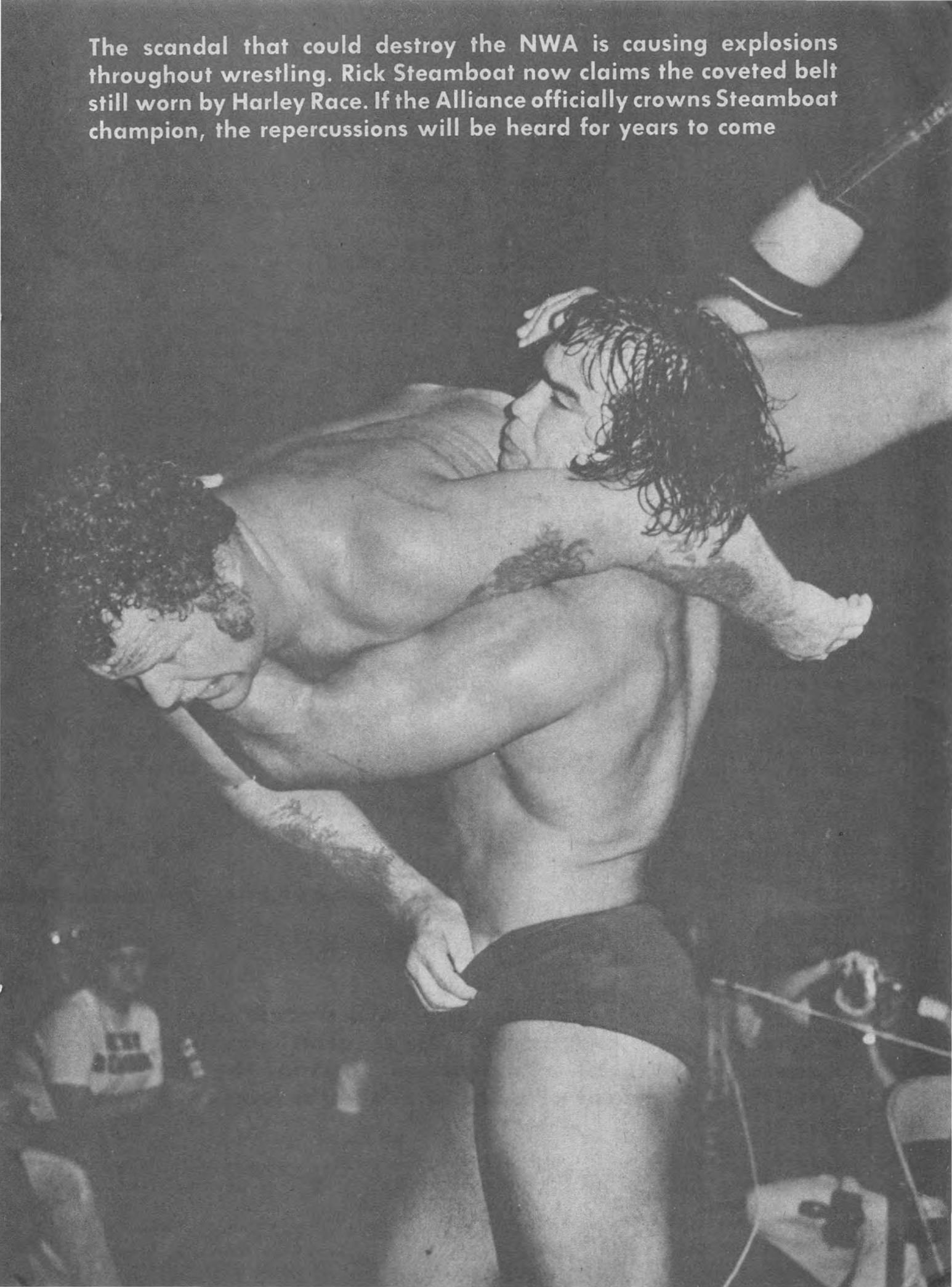
Harley, seeing his masculinity threatened, readily agreed to this unusual extension. The next five minutes were decisive.

Rick Steamboat won.

(Continued on page 54)

SHOULD THEY FORCE HARLEY RACE TO GIVE HIS BELT TO RICK STEAMBOAT?

The scandal that could destroy the NWA is causing explosions throughout wrestling. Rick Steamboat now claims the coveted belt still worn by Harley Race. If the Alliance officially crowns Steamboat champion, the repercussions will be heard for years to come



ONE ON

(Bob Backlund, the current WWF heavyweight champion, was in our Boston office recently while preparing for a match in the Boston Gardens. Superstar Graham, the man from whom Backlund won the title, was in our New York office. The following is an unedited transcript of the conversation the two men had over a Bell Telephone Picturephone)



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM:

Well, if it isn't Howdy Doody!

BOB BACKLUND:

Hello. Mr. Graham.

SG: Call me Star.

BB: I'd rather call you Mr. Graham, if that's all right with you.

SG: You know, Bobby, I've told this to everyone else, and now I'm really glad that I can tell it to you. You stole the belt from me, Bobby. Everyone knows my foot was on the rope. You took what was

Every month the telephone wires will crackle as two top grapplers rage and argue. We'll print the unedited transcript of their conversations, giving the fans a privileged glimpse at wrestlers which can be found nowhere else

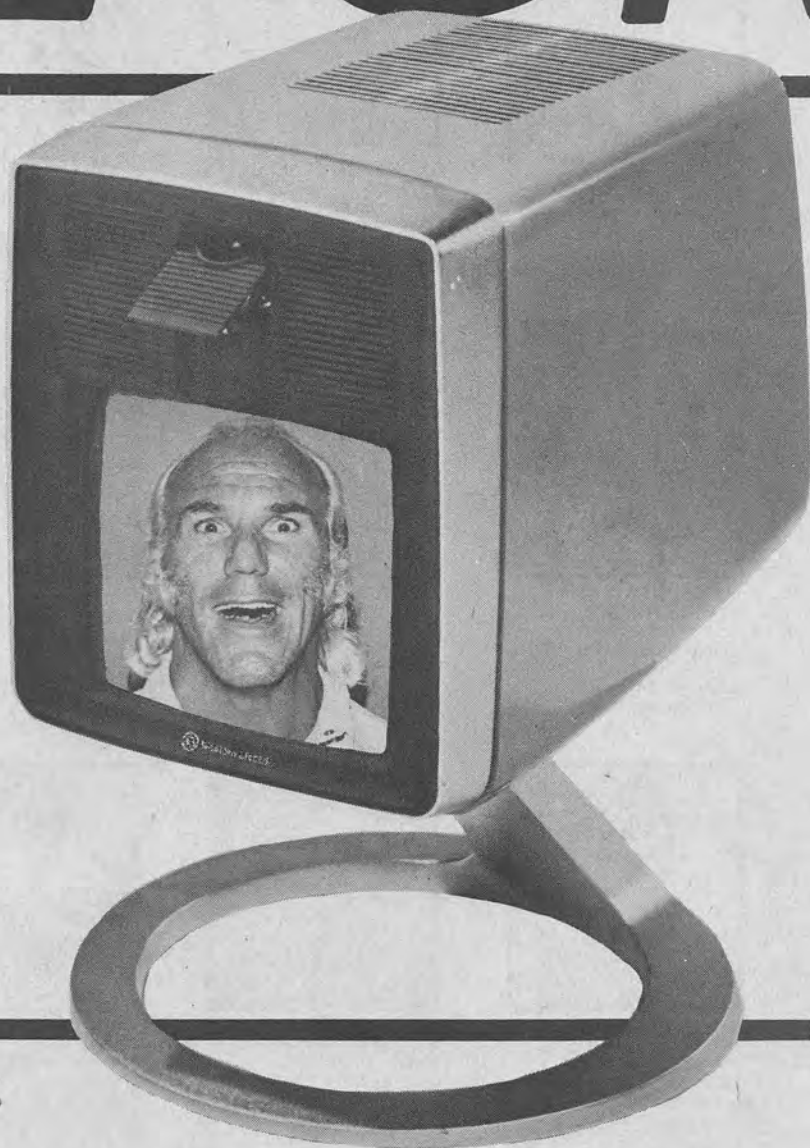
rightfully mine. You really don't have any right to be called champion.

BB: First of all, Mr. Graham, I

didn't know your foot was on the rope at the time. If you say I did, you're lying, and you know it. Next, the minute I

heard that there was some controversy over the decision, I immediately offered you a rematch. I don't see what else

NONE



I could have done.

SG: You should have given me the belt back, you little twerp. You should have crawled into my dressing room and said, "Please, oh please, great Superstar, please take this belt, which is rightfully yours." That's what I would have done.

BB: I seem to recall that there was some controversy the night you won the title from Bruno Sammartino. You used the ropes for leverage; it was clearly seen on the films and video tape of the bout. Why didn't you give Bruno back the belt?

SG: I don't seem to recall anything

of that sort ever occurring. How dare you say something like that, you nerd. Everyone knows I won the belt fair and square from that Italian sausage. But enough of him. Why haven't you given me any rematches in the last two months? Are you scared, boy?

BB: No, Mr. Graham. I'm not scared of you—or anyone else. You were champion, so you should know how the system works. The champion doesn't make the matches, the promoter does. I have to wrestle the number one ranked contender. At the present time, that's either George Steele or Ivan Koloff, not you.

SG: Just a damn minute, baby. Are you saying I don't deserve another title shot. Me! The great Superstar Graham? The former—and future WWF champion. How can you say something like that?

BB: I didn't say you weren't deserving of a shot. I merely said you are not now ranked as the number one contender. That may change, of course.

SG: Of course it will change! I am number one! And I'm a better wrestler than you are, and you know it.

BB: I have to disagree with you on that. You are a very strong man. I can't deny it. But I believe I have more of a wrestling background than you do. The reason I won the

(Continued on page 56)

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Rhodes his favorite.
Likes good guys.
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GEORGE SLEASMAN (15)
RD 2
Stoystown, PA 15563
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his favorite. Likes good
guys. Girls for pen pals.



GRAEME IRELAND (24)
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Mt. Victoria, Wellington
NEW ZEALAND
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Silva his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Girls for PP's.



DAVID PITTS (14)
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Decatur, AL 35601
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Rhodes his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



DAVID RODRICK (7)
RR 1, Box 106
Pickering, MO 64476
Enjoys fishing. Andre
the Giant his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



BILL GRAD (11)
3510 Hermitage
Jacksonville, FL 32211
Likes sports. Dusty
Rhodes his favorite.
Likes good guys. Boys
for pen pals.



STEVE HARMON (9)
300 Welches Pt. Rd.
Milford, CT 06460
Likes soccer. Andre the
giant his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Boys for PP's.



BILLY FORSYTH (9)
5100 SW 114th Ct.
Miami, FL 33165
Likes all sports. Billy
Graham his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



KEVIN MARSH (14)
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Ashland, NH 03217
Enjoys singing. Tony
Garea his favorite. Likes
good guys. Anyone
for pen pals.



HELEN SATCHELL (18)
414 Sea Breeze Drive
Port Richey, FL 33568
Rides horses. Dusty
Rhodes her favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.

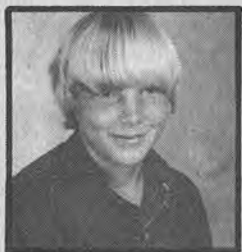


WAYNE TOLER (12)
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Washington, NC 27889
Collects magazines. Paul
Jones his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



TONY MERCADO (13)
2 Central Ave.
Piscataway, NJ 08854
Likes baseball. Mil
Mascaras his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.

N PALS



JACK BANKSON (14)
7606 Scott Lane
Rockford, IL 61111
Likes football. Crusher
his favorite. Likes
good and bad guys.
Girls for pen pals.



DARRIN SCHOFIELD (13)
RR 3
Wolfville, N.S. CANADA
Likes all sports. Leo
Burk his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Anyone for PP's.



JOHN PORCHE (13)
3557 Hermitage
Jacksonville, FL 32211
Enjoys basketball. Dusty
Rhodes his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



KURT SCHIEFELBEIN (13)
1619 Manitowoc Ave.
S. Milwaukee, WI 53172
Likes sports. Mil
Mascaras his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



RON BRANT (12)
3806 Pyramid Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15227
Collects stamps. Billy
Graham his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Boys for PP's.



STEVEN DIAHY (12)
338 77 St.
Brooklyn, NY 11209
Enjoys baseball. Bob
Backlund his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



CHRIS HO (8)
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Baden, PA 15005
Enjoys bowling. Ivan
Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



ERIC HO (10)
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Baden, PA 15005
Likes football. Peter
Maivia his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JAMES MARCIO (11)
Birch Drive, RR 4
Brewster, NY 10509
Enjoys reading. Mil
Mascaras his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Anyone for PP's.



CHRIS MOREFIELD (17)
Star Rte 10
Cochranville, PA 19330
Enjoys rock music. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for PP's.



STEVEN GROH (12)
9030 W. Harrison
West Allis, WI 53227
Likes basketball. Crusher
his favorite. Likes
good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



SANTIAGO DELACRUZ (23)
ACO 2nd Bn 33rd Armor
APO New York, NY 09045
Likes to fish. Dick the
Bruiser his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



LARRY STOY (20)
21 Marion Ave.
Sumter, SC 29150
Likes to act. Dusty
Rhodes his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Anyone for PP's.



TOM ZELECHOWSKI (14)
RD 1 Box 169
Aliquippa, PA 15001
Enjoys football. Ivan
Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



KATHY HILTON (12)
1617 Orange St.
Wilmington, NC 28401
Likes sports. Rick
Steamboat her favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



RALPH WEBB (15)
8302 57th St.
Tacoma, WA 98467
Likes football. Moon
Dog Mayne his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



TIM WARGO (17)
2231 Hillthorpe Ave.
Roslyn, PA 19001
Plays guitar. Bruno
Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



WINNIE MAKATOA (21)
96 River Park Cres.
Henderson, Auckland 8
NEW ZEALAND
Enjoys music. Don
Muraco her favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



KENNY CURRAN (15)
Rusky Lane
Hyde Park, NY 12538
Likes sports. Billy
Graham his favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Girls for PP's.



DEBBIE SCHWAB (21)
15 Pulawski Ave.
South River, NJ 08882
Likes karate. Bruno
Sammartino her favorite.
Likes good guys.
Anyone for pen pals.

IN THE BEGINNING, there was so much promise. It was a privilege to see Ernie Ladd wrestle. His size and strength, combined with extraordinary athletic abilities, made him both hero and idol to thousands of fans. I wrote at the time, "With Ladd wrestling, scientific grappling may be entering its Golden Era."

Those words are agony to me now. That dream of excellence perished in the flames of Ladd's burning ambition. The once superb athlete became a ruthless rulebreaker, a man driven to win at any cost. The Golden Era is now a reign of terror.

There is no excuse for Ladd. His gifts made him responsible to the fans; his ability was a privilege not



ERNIE LADD- GUILTY AS

to be abused. But instead, spitting in the face of everyone who admired him, for no reason except victory lust, he became a rulebreaker.

These many years, I've seen Ladd and hoped he'd change. Every so often, as if to taunt those who love wrestling, he returns to his scientific origins. Then, when

he's suckered us into believing in him again, he once again becomes a rulebreaker. He gives us a glimpse at his majesty and then spits in our faces.

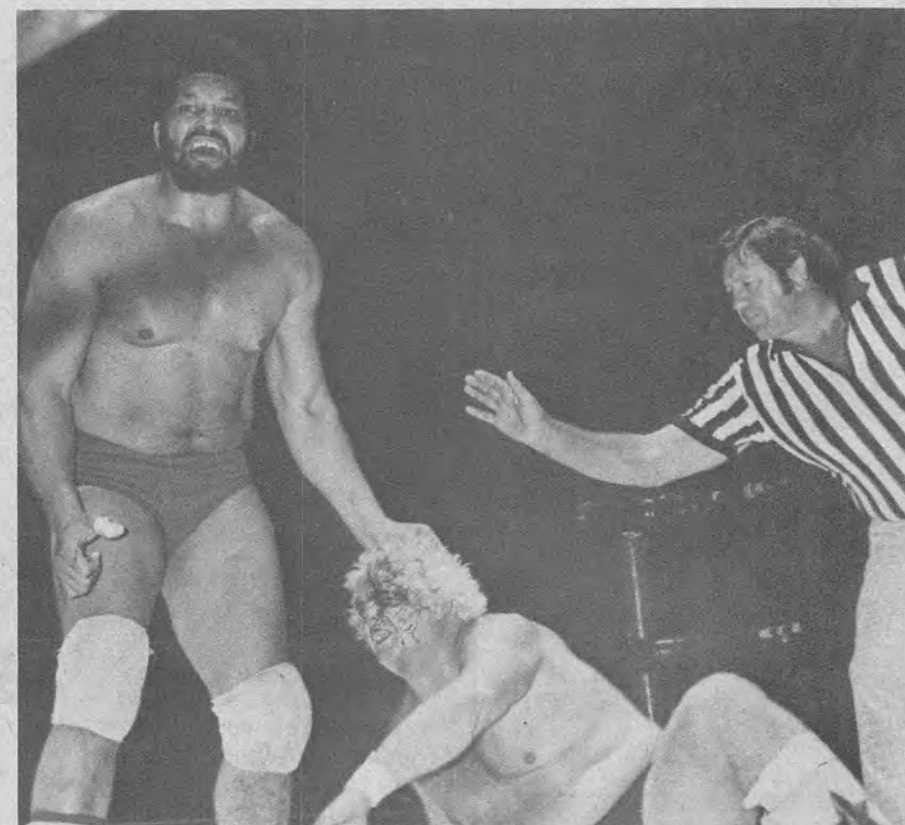
I've given up on Ladd. Hope is gone; there is nothing left but hatred. Never again will I be fooled into thinking there is hope of him becoming a scientific wrestler. No

matter what he does, where he does it, Ernie Ladd will be my enemy and the enemy of everyone who loves wrestling.

What does this mean? It is the duty of every fan to give Ladd's enemies moral support. When Ladd pretends to be a scientific wrestler, his charade must be greeted with boos. No longer will



The windpipe of Mil Mascaras is Ladd's prime target (above). Ladd stops Bruno Sammartino for the moment (below). He gets savage pleasure from pummeling big Dusty Rhodes and bloodying him (right).



As fiendish as Ernie Ladd has been to his opponents, it pales before the danger faced by Associate Editor Randy Gordon in putting together this story. Finally, the truth will be printed about this most despicable of wrestlers

CHARGED!

he make the fans his patsy. He is a disgrace and must be treated as such. No man so gifted has ever betrayed the fans so badly.

These words must be backed up by facts. We have to look at the history of Ladd's career to realize why war has been declared. It's the saddest chapter in wrestling's record books.

Ladd has wrestled the best grapplers of his generation. He seems to get his thrills out of savaging men most respected by fans. Everyone remembers one of these matches with great bitterness. Perhaps his most despicable series of matches were against Dusty Rhodes. This could have been one of the classic match-ups in

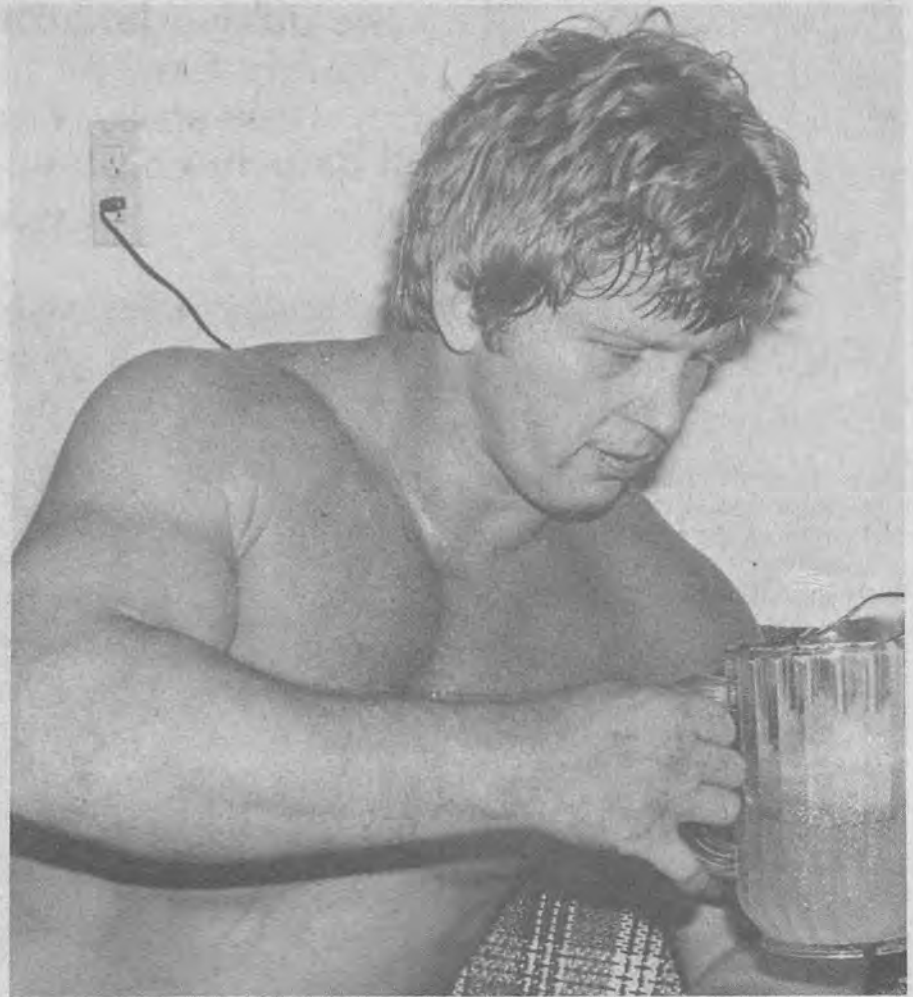
wrestling history—the powerhouse against the agile athlete. Fans came from hundreds of miles away to witness this confrontation.

There are those who still mourn the wasted opportunity. Ladd insulted everyone by resorting to the most viciously ugly tactics imaginable. Rhodes tried to keep

(Continued on page 62)

ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 8)



Here's a photo of Bob drinking lemonade. According to Albano "it is an illegal vitamin concoction of vitamin B-235 and X-876. He should be arrested!"

The ones you were going to use to blackmail Backlund and get Koloff installed as WWWF champ. I got them, you wormslime, and now I'm going to destroy them."

For a large man, he moved with surprising agility. Fortunately, he was too far away and couldn't catch me.

"See this, Captain, my boy," I yelled to him from across the street. As I pulled out the negatives and lit a match. "These are destroyed," I held the flaming film away from me. "As you are destroyed."

"Who the hell are you?" he screamed, still chasing me.

"Gary Morgenstein," I grinned. "And don't let me catch you blackmailing anyone again, understand. Because I'm sick and tired of you stinking

could, but I won't. I tried to reinvigorate my decrepit body with my 11th cup of coffee today and took off for Albano's home. The stinker was going to watch me burn the negatives.

The rat was puttering around in his garden when I pulled up. He didn't know who I was. Good. He just glared ominously at me as I leaped out of my Spitfire and stormed up the driveway.

"Lou Albano?"

"Yeah, what's it to you, four-eyes?"

"I got the negatives."

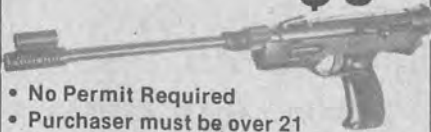
"What?"

"I got the negatives, sucker.

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rulebreakers violating the laws. If you people are too damn vulgar to stay within the rules, then get the hell out of wrestling. It's one thing to use a foreign object in the ring, it's



The champion is approached by one of Albano's flunkies and asked to take a bribe. Bobby belted him and walked off.

another thing when you try and blackmail a great man like Bob Backlund." Albano stopped running after me. We both caught our breaths. I continued.

"Now you listen good and hard, Albano. I'll be on your tail, watching you, you and Blassie and Arion and Graham and the Grand Wizard and any other fiend the garbage dump throws up. You keep trying this and I'll whip you bad, dig?"

I walked to my car and heard his final threat.

"You're a dead man, Morgenstein. We'll get you for this."

I shrugged, somehow content that I had solved my first real problem. Michael Kape would be proud of me.

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Ah, not before I pour myself some Chivas and call Linda. □

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BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 10)



"Our specialty," said Albano, "will be sneak-attacking and hopefully maiming such goody-goodies as Backlund, Bravo, Rhodes, and Putski. We'll attack them anywhere. In the ring, in a hallway—even in their own dressing rooms. We'll put them out of wrestling forever. Imagine how good we'll be for wrestling!"

"But the commissions," interjected one of The Lumberjacks. "They'd suspend or even ban us from wrestling for sure."

"That's the best part," laughed Albano. "The Masked Marauding Matadors" will be banned. The Captain and his Lumberjacks will still be around!" They laughed so loud and long that they began to choke. At that moment, I was hoping they'd never catch their breath.

Then I got a brilliant idea. I spoke to the owner of the arena, and asked him to grant me permission to carry my idea through. He listened to me, and thankfully, consented.

Right before Albano and The Lumberjacks were due to face the tag team of Tony Garea and Haystacks Calhoun, I stepped into the ring, and announced to the fans that I had a tape I



Above: The Spoiler may have his secret identity uncovered soon. Left: Lou Albano's plan to put his Lumberjacks under masks has been exposed.

wanted them to hear. I told them who they'd be listening to, and a little of what to expect. Then I signaled towards the press box, and they turned on my tape recorder which was plugged into the speaker system in the arena. The packed house heard every word of what Albano and The Lumberjacks had discussed only a short time earlier. Boos and jeers rocked the arena. Albano and his cronies were reduced to being embarrassed, red-faced lunatics who wished they had never come to the arena. Good for them, and may the "Masked Marauding Matadors" rest in peace.

I've gotten a lot of letters asking me to disclose the identity of Spoiler I and Spoiler II. Spoiler I I'm still trailing, hoping to discover his identity. I can tell you Spoiler II is definitely one of three guys—Bobby Duncum, Killer Karl Kox, or Buddy Wolff. Somehow, I believe those three rule-breakers take turns at donning

the mask of Spoiler II.

In his dressing room before his matches, Dino Bravo enjoys relaxing with a videotape machine, watching films of some of his favorite wrestlers in action. Who does he enjoy watching most?

"Bruno Sammartino is always exciting to watch," said Dino. "He just seems to do everything well. I feel I've become a better wrestler just by watching those tapes."

Dino also watches films of himself in action, hoping to spot some flaw in his style that he can correct at the last minute. I like Bravo's entire attitude and approach to wrestling. Personally, I think he's a future champion.

CONFIDENTIAL TO LADY-BUG: Dino received your tape, along with a ton of other mail I gave him. Thanks, he says.

In his dressing room before every match, big Ernie Ladd tapes pictures of his opponent on 1' x 1' wooden boards. Then, with a friend holding up the boards one at a time, Ladd splinters them with one mighty smash from his cantaloupe-sized fists. His fists slice through the boards easier than he cuts through his morning pat of butter.

I'm in awe of his incredible strength, and also very worried. Ladd has plans. Big ones. However, his plans could ruin wrestling. He thinks nothing of crippling an opponent, nor does he care for you, the fans. It's about time he was stopped, or at least slowed down. More than stopped or slowed down, however, I'd like to see him change his ways. Imagine how good he'd be for our super sport if he wrestled scientifically. I'm willing to pull out all stops to either make him see the light or quit.

Hopefully, I'll be around next month to tell you about it! ☐

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BODYSLAM & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 12)

usually wind up as also-rans, popular failures. Rhodes could be a champion, if his brains were equal to his athletic prowess. But until a miracle occurs, and Rhodes gets smart, he'll remain a challenger and never become champion.

Which is a good thing for the sport. A Dusty Rhodes championship reign would be worse than the sport be outlawed. After all, a law can be changed. Wrestling could never survive Dusty at its head. It would take generations before anyone would get interested in the sport again.

One night, when most of the world was fast asleep, I spoke to Dusty about his change of style. We once considered each other a friend, so the hatchet was buried for old times' sake. How could he go so wrong?

Dusty started by saying, "There's something special about hearing the fans cheer for you. I can't explain it, but you know that's the way it's supposed to be. I used to hold my head up as a dare for anyone to hit me on the chin. Now, I hold up my head because I'm proud."

"All great men," I pointed out, "have gone against the crowd. Two or three generations from now, fans will realize the so-called 'rulebreakers' were really this century's heroes. Crowds have a habit of stringing up people who try to bring them the truth."

"It doesn't matter," Dusty admitted, "what history thinks of me. I want to be admired by people here and now. That's what is really important, at least to me."

"In the end, Dusty," I warned him, "that doesn't mean a thing.



Okay gang. What's this? We all know! It's a piledriver. This hold, Jack, is against the law!

As the Bible says, 'I want to go into my Father's house justified.' If you can look back on your life, and know you did right no matter what the world thought, then it's been a life well spent. If you sold out for 30 pieces of silver, your life isn't worth the time you spent living it."

"There are a lot of ways to betray yourself," Dusty countered. "I believe in what I'm doing, more than I've ever believed in anything before. If I ever wrestled any other way, I could never live with myself. For the first time in my life, what I'm doing means something more than victory or defeat. Because of how I'm wrestling, the sport is better. Winning isn't everything. Decency is far more important."

"Today's decency," I spat, "is tomorrow's stupidity."

"I'm living today," Dusty concluded. He then got up and left without saying farewell. Or goodbye.

Dusty Rhodes used to be a friend of mine. Now, I despise everything he stands for. His



Breaking chairs over the head of Tanaka and other fine gentlemen is a hobby to the big fat whale. How could you idiots keep supporting this "thing!"

disgrace is the disgrace of any many who lets the crowd drown out the voice of his convictions. Dusty Rhodes was once somebody. But that was far away and long ago.

The man who used to be an Outlaw is no more. There is nothing left of that superb wrestler. All we have now is a crude, simpering fool begging rirraff to like him. A man wouldn't do that.

For old times' sake, I thought about not writing this column. Why attack a man who used to be a friend. But that man is gone, as good as dead. What remains now is a millstone around the neck of wrestling, choking the life out of the sport he used to love.

Dusty Rhodes deserves no consideration or pity. He's a disgrace. It's time somebody said so. □

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DUSTY'S ARMY

(Continued from Page 35)

membership card. That's all Dusty asks. Obviously, there's no fee for enlisting in the Army. You only need dedication.

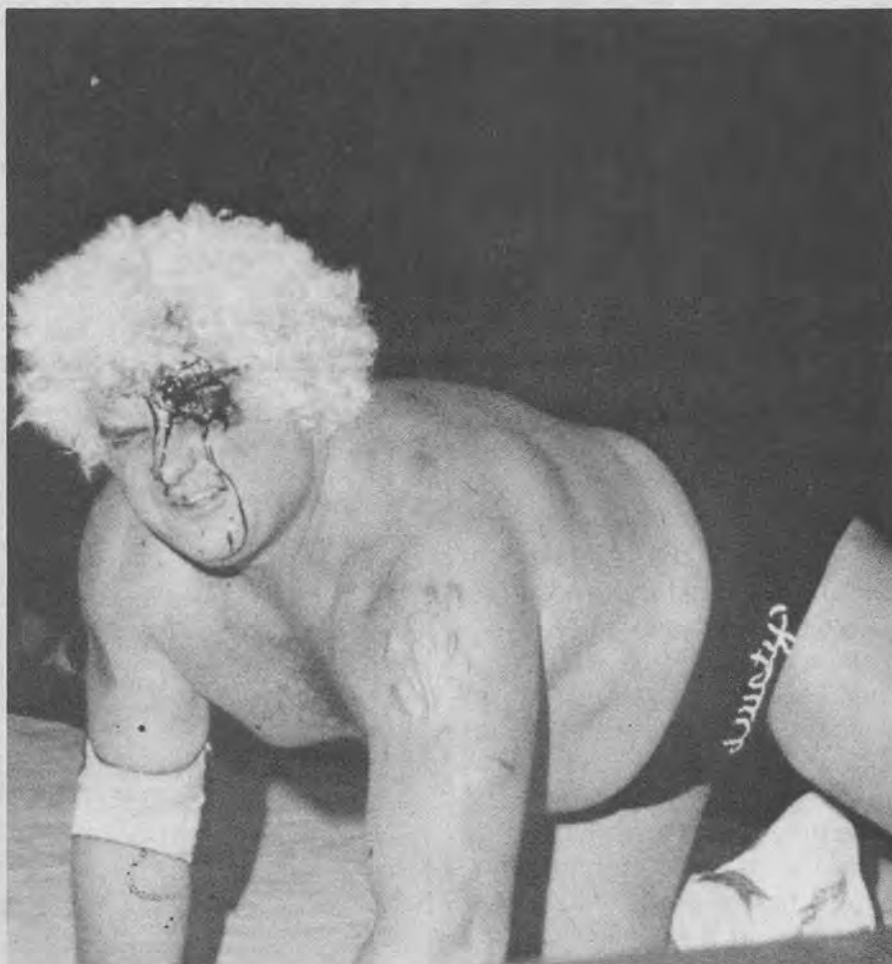
"You got a lot of so-called armies, but there ain't no army in the world that will be able to match mine," Dusty said.

There are wrestlers who scoff at this army.

good it's going to do that whale," Graham continued. "Don't these morons realize that they may have an army, but they got a buffoon as a general?"

And this came from another critic.

"I've heard of stupid things, but Dusty's Army is the most asinine thing I've ever heard of,



Dusty Rhodes is a man who is loved and respected by the fans. What is more, Dusty feels mutually about the fans. He realizes that it is his legion of fans who have made him a superstar.

"I heard the stories about the fat clown putting together an army, and I almost broke a rib laughing so hard," said Superstar Graham.

"I want to see all those little twerp fans waving their puny little cards and let's see what

and I've seen them all, everything there is to see," Captain Lou Albano sneered.

"That blob of week-old crabmeat is a disgrace to wrestling. And his fans are the dumbest people alive. They have only one purpose: cleaning



Wave your membership card and root if you see Dusty down as in the above photo. Dusty (below) will be grateful to you!



sewers."

Dusty chuckled at the rather predictable reaction from the rulebreakers.

"Just talk, that's all. I knew my idea would get around. Wait 'til a match and my army starts whoopin' it up. That'll show those clods," Rhodes chuckled.

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**BEN
STRONG**

HARLEY RACE — RICK STEAMBOAT

(Continued from Page 38)

Rick Steamboat should be
NWA champion.

But he isn't. Harley Race still
is.

"Five minutes didn't mean
anything," Race insisted. "It's
the same as if he had mugged
me in an alley. It wasn't part of

the official match anymore. It
wasn't legit. I just agreed so I
could shut his mouth. I shoulda
known Steamboat had paid off
the ref and was fixing the
match."

"He agreed to it. He wanted it.
He thought he could beat me, but



Rick snatches Harley off his perch and is
ready to slam him (above). A
spinebreaker racks up points for Rick late
in the match (above right). A giant
headache for Harley (below) as he tries to
find a way out.

he couldn't," Steamboat
insisted with equal fervor. "I
beat him fair and square and
now I want the NWA belt. It was
legal wasn't it?"

According to an attorney
within the NWA offices, this
match poses a singular problem
never ruled upon before.

"Once a match is set up, that
is the exact time the match
should be decided," said the
attorney. "However, if both
parties agree to an extension,
then that extension shall be
considered part of the match
and any decision during that
time extension is legal and
binding."

But there was no contractual
agreement.

"A verbal agreement is valid
in this case. There is such a



thing as verbal contracts, but I won't go into any legal talk. It is possible that Steamboat is champion, but you have to prove that both men knew what they were doing."

"That both men knew what they were doing." That is the crucial element, the escape hatch through which Harley Race is attempting to escape.

"After wrestling for an hour, you gonna tell me that I had the 'mental capacity' that the lawyers are talking about, to make a decision like this? No, I was agitated," Race said, face purplish. "I didn't really think that my belt was on the line. I just thought Steamboat wanted to wrestle some more."

"You really think I'm stupid enough to risk my belt on a five minute match? Nah, I wouldn't do that. I thought we were just goin' to wrestle for fun."

Fun?

"I said, for everyone to hear, that we would wrestle for five minutes and the winner would be declared champ," Steamboat shrieked distraughtly. "Everyone in the arena heard me. Race nodded and said okay. The ref heard it. The writers heard it. Everyone knew it was for the belt."

"What is he trying to prove? I'll go to court if I have to. This is my title and I won't be cheated out of it by Harley Race or anyone else. I am the champion of the NWA and I want all my fans to write in to the magazines and NWA offices and support me in this."

"His people can write all the letters they want, assuming they can write," Race chuckled nastily. "It won't do Steamboat any good. If he wants to wrestle again, legally, I'll do it. But I've got the belt." Race patted the diamond-studded belt.

"I'm champion, hah-hah, me, Harley Race. Tough luck, Rick Steamboat. Tough luck. □

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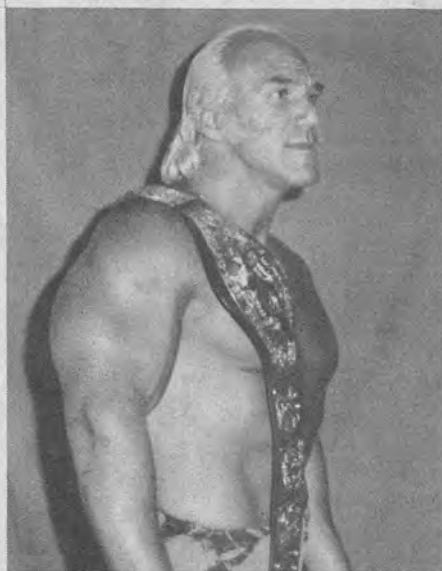
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ONE ON ONE

(Continued from Page 41)



belt from you is because I was able to neutralize your great strength. When we battled wrestling hold against wrestling hold, I usually had the advantage.

SG: You little liar! The only true thing you've said during this entire conversation is I'm stronger than you, which...

BB: Just a second. I never said that. What I said is you are a very strong man.

SG: Listen, boy, don't interrupt your betters. I was talking, so you shut up. What I was trying to say was this: I matched *you* hold for hold. The only reason you won is because you cheat better than I do. The referee takes a look at your sweet little choir boy face and says, "No, that nice little All-American boy doesn't have a foreign object. No, he can't be choking poor Superstar Graham. No, Bob Backlund isn't gouging poor Superstar Graham's eyes out. I must be seeing things." You little twerp, you've got the



Above left: In the days in which he held the title, Superstar Graham was always willing to pose with his championship belt. Above: Bobby is jubilant on the night he wins the title from Graham.

referees in your hip pocket and you know it.

BB: That is so foolish, I won't even dignify it by answering it.

SG: Tell me, Bobby boy, how much does it cost these days to bribe a referee. I hope you get a better deal than Sammartino. He used to bribe 'em one at a time. I hear it's cheaper by the dozen. Is that true?

BB: You don't expect anyone to believe a thing you say, Graham. If anything, I've found the referees are more strict on me than on guys like yourself or Koloff or Steele.

SG: More lies. Than why am I disqualified more times than you?

BB: Maybe because you do more illegal things than me.

SG: Well, Backlund, as usual, you've become boring. But just remember this. Do you recall our second bout at

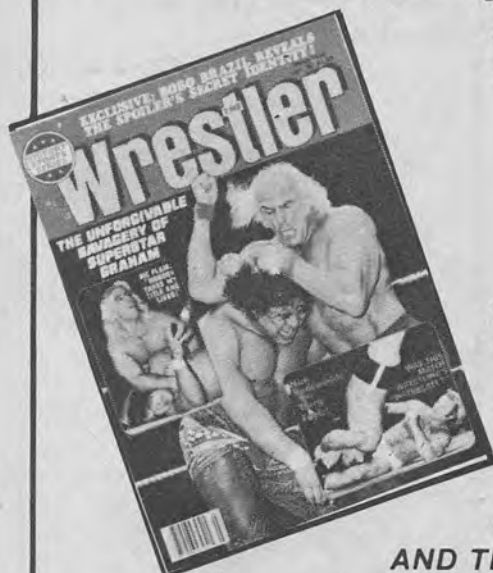
Madison Square Garden? The night you bled like a stuck pig? The night you needed 23 stitches to close your wounds? Well, that's nothing compared to what you'll get the next time we meet. I want my belt back, Bobby, and I'm damn well gonna get it!

BB: Mr. Graham, all I'll say is this: I'll be ready for anything you can possibly do. And you know it. So long... for now.

SG: Goodbye, Howdy Doody. Oh, look, it's nearly nine o'clock. It's way past your bedtime. □

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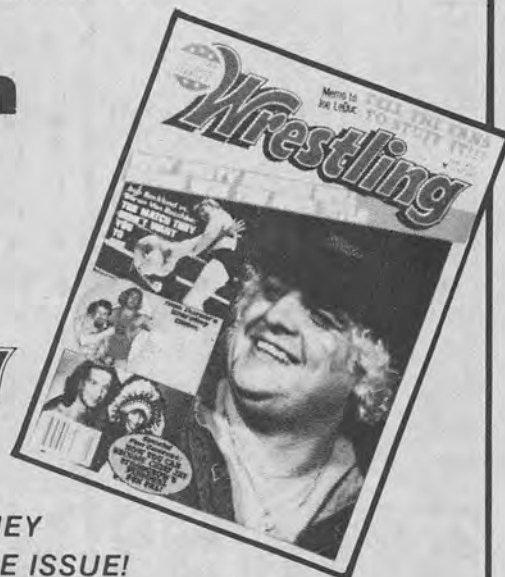
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from Page 18)

brother. Same with Dominic DeNucci. Those two pencil-necked geeks are not fit to be called wrestlers.

TIM WARGO
Roslyn, Pa.



Mil Mascaras (above) and Dusty Rhodes are involved in a scandal that Gary Morgenstein is trying to solve.

HE'LL DIE YOUNG

I'd like to write about your newest columnist, Gary Morgenstein. First of all, he certainly is different than Michael Kape. I'm not sure which one I like better, but I can bet that Morgy won't be around for too long.

I think he has a death wish. He's going to put himself in some dangerous situation that he won't be able to get out of. Blindly going into a motel room and taking a chance that Mil Mascaras and Dusty Rhodes would mistake him for a rulebreaker spy is a huge risk. He's going to die young, but he does have guts, and I respect that.

RONALD COLLINS
Quincy, Mass.

STRIP HIM CLEAN

Yes, "Should Nick Bockwinkle Be Stripped Of His Title" (October 1978) was the best

thing your magazine has ever done. Bockwinkle is the worst champion the sport has ever known. Men like Verne Gagne and Billy Robinson deserve to be champions, not Bockwinkle.

And his depraved manager, Bobby Heenan, is an absolute maniac. He is going to get



Many fans have written in that Nick Bockwinkle should not be wearing the AWA championship belt.

Bockwinkle killed one of these days. As a loyal wrestling fan who enjoys the sport, I will write many letters asking for Bockwinkle to be stripped of his belt and sent to Siberia.

KAREN GORNEY
Tulsa, Okla.

LEAVE HIM ALONE

When are people going to get off Dusty Rhodes' back? "The Secret Behind Dusty Rhodes' Bionic Elbow" (October 1978) is the worst sort of crass sensationalism I have ever read.

Dusty hasn't loaded up his elbow in years. He should be trusted. Why don't these fools look into people like Greg Valentine, Abdullah, or Ric Flair if they want to do something good. Dusty has earned the love of millions and I think people should leave him alone. Once and for all.

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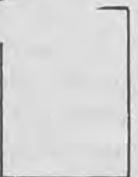
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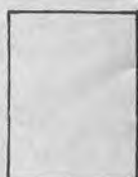
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ERNIE LADD

(Continued from Page 45)

the battle on a high plane, as the fans wished, but he did so at the risk of his life. Finally, Dusty used his own gutter tactics. What could have been a landmark match became a back-alley brawl.

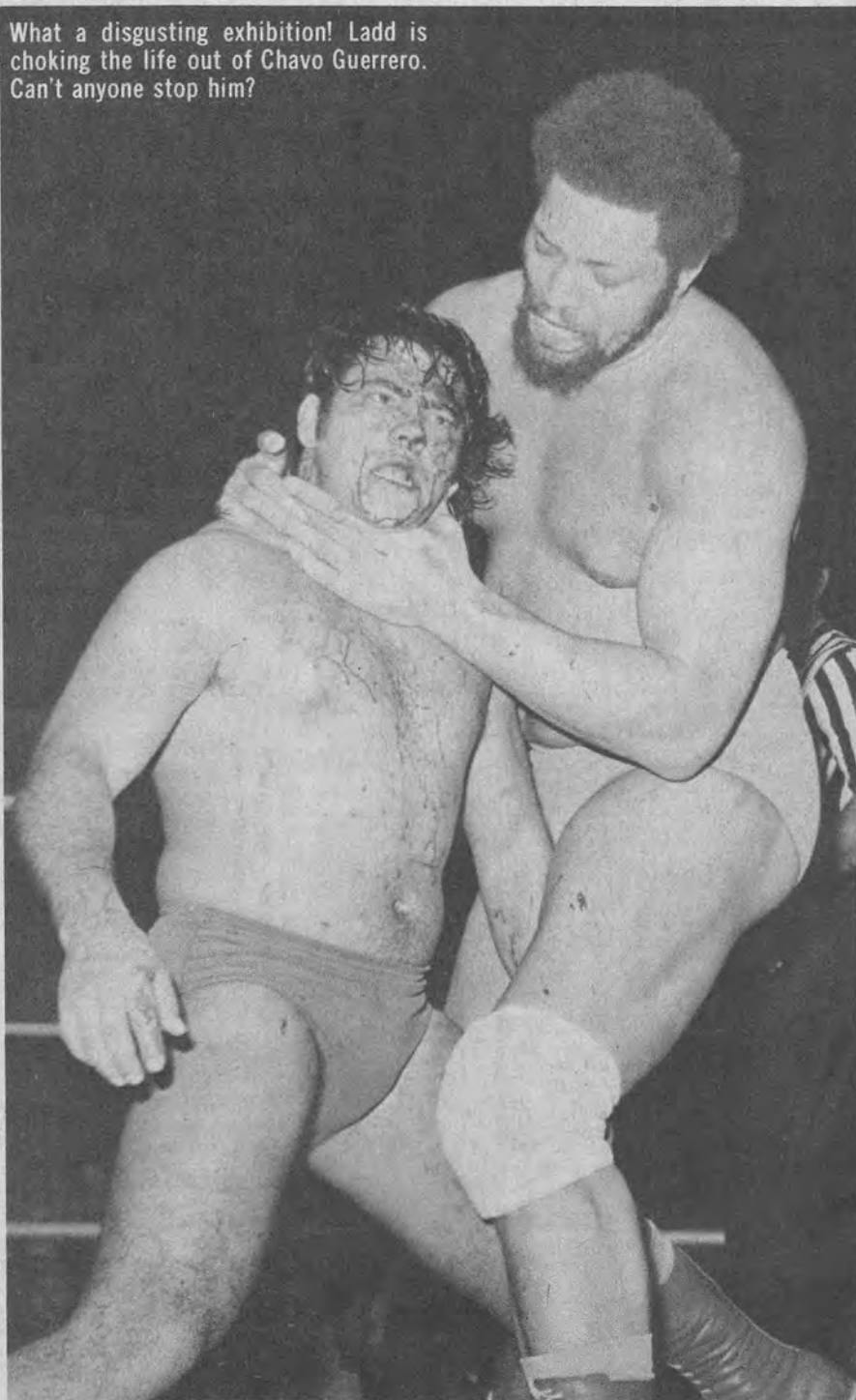
After the match, Dusty was heartbroken. He showed me a letter in which Ladd promised to

wrestle fairly. Ernie pretended to want the bout to be scientific.

"He promised," Rhodes whispered, "and then he betrayed me. I'll get revenge for this."

Rhodes did. The next matches were furious exhibitions of wrestling savagery. They were never the classic bouts everyone

What a disgusting exhibition! Ladd is choking the life out of Chavo Guerrero. Can't anyone stop him?



wanted. The reason for this was Ladd. He's a disgrace.

There have been many others. His wars against Bruno Sammartino are a study in brutality. Ladd had the chance to once again work his way into the annals of wrestling history. Two powerful grapplers at the height of their powers would have a great attraction. Fans hoped Ladd would try to remain scientific long enough for there to be a few fine moments. Instead, Ladd was reprehensible from the opening bell. It was a disgrace, a slander on the good name of wrestling.

"You expect this from Ladd," Sammartino said after the match. "He's never going to be a scientific wrestler. There's no hope. A few years ago, he was magnificent, really about as good as anyone could be. I'd give three years off my professional life to test myself against Ladd wrestling scientifically. It would push me to my limits as an athlete. But that'll never happen. Ladd will never be fair. It's just not in the cards."

Other wrestlers say the same things. Jack Brisco once said of Ladd, "One day, he'll look back on his career and realize the opportunities he's wasted. I hope it sticks in his throat but good. There are just so many great athletes in the world. When one throws away his gifts just to win matches, that's a crime. I hope when it's all over, Ladd really suffers for what he's done. He could have been the best."

The list can go on and on. Ladd takes pleasure in betraying his colleagues, the fans, and the commissions. He's using wrestling as his private whipping boy. He delights in insulting the fans and the rules. It's his own private game. There's no reason the rest of us have to be losers.

How do we win? Tell Ladd every time he appears in an arena what we think of him. Signs declaring, "Ladd Is A Disgrace!" should be
(Continued on page 64)

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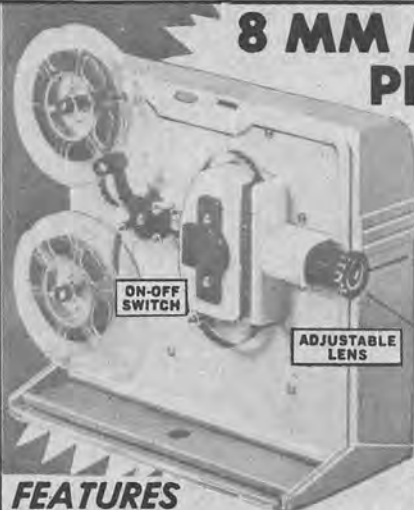
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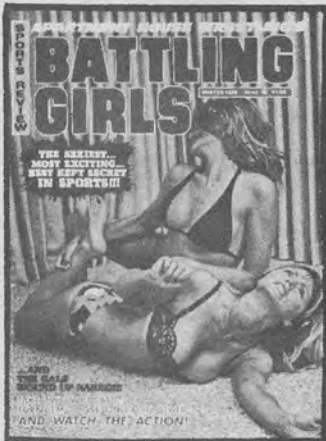
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WINTER 1975

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ERNIE LADD

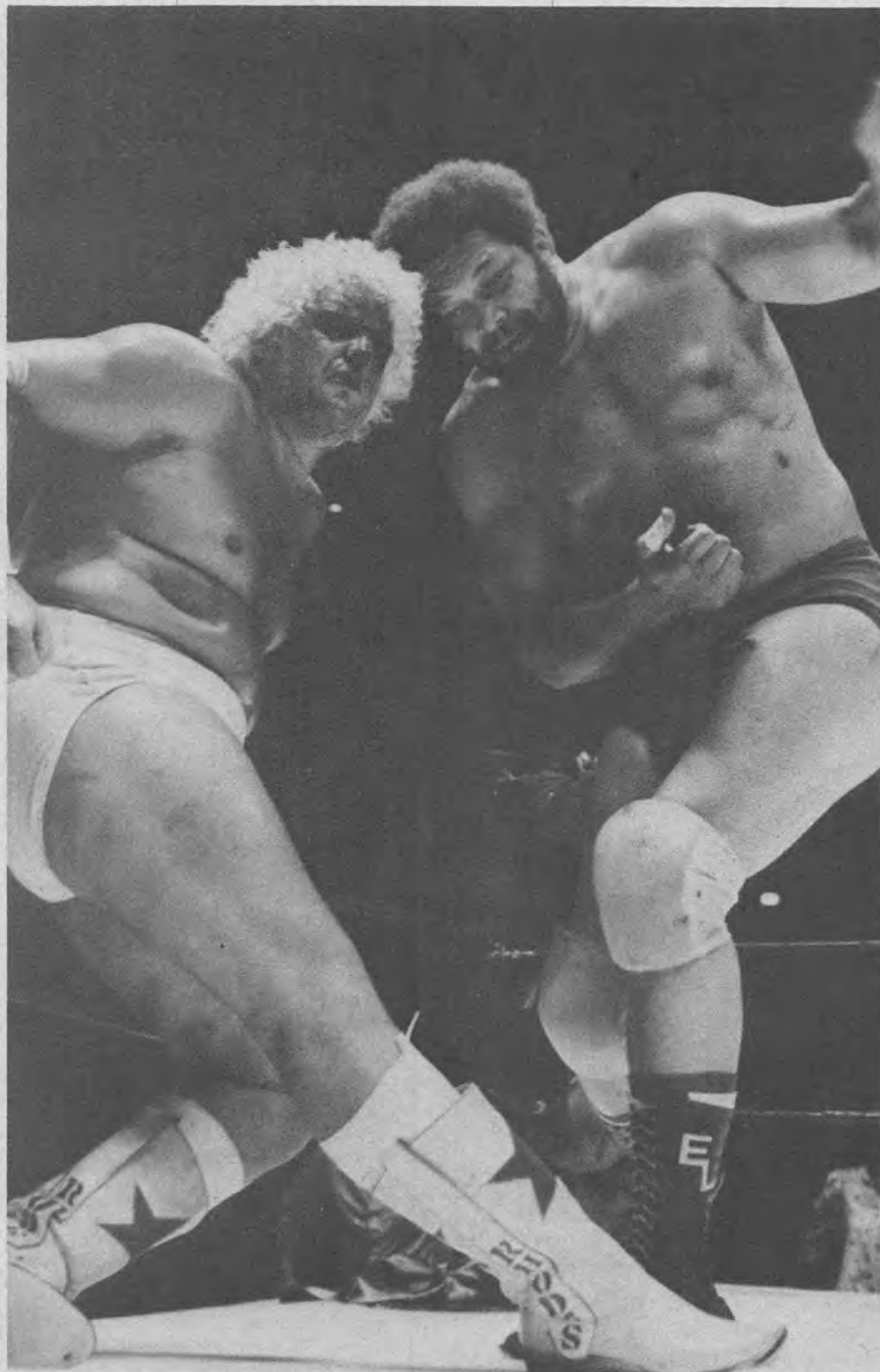
(Continued from Page 63)

hoisted high in the air. When he's in trouble, cheers should shake the rafters. Tell him as loud and as often as possible that we're on to his game and won't be fooled any longer.

Ladd, we're not your patsies!

Now, Ernie looks down on the fans. Soon, he'll have to look at us eyeball-to-eyeball, staring at the people he can no longer fool. Ernie Ladd is a disgrace. We know it. It's about time he knows we know it!

Preparing to write this article, I



Ladd's classic brawling style is at its best in his matches against Dusty. Ladd had become a scientific wrestler at one time, but that only lasted a matter of weeks. He prefers savaging opponents.



Ladd uses his clenched fist against huge Haystacks Calhoun (above). A handful of trunks and throat helps Ladd against Bruno (below). Mil Mascaras' throat aids Ladd (bottom of page).



read over the early reports of Ladd's career. The man was splendid. I have the stories here before me. The splendid abilities that Ladd showed were promises of a great career. Today, he has become the enemy of anyone who admires the sport and the sportsmen.

This is my declaration of war against Ernie Ladd. There can be no surrender, no truce. Wrestling demands Ladd be defeated. All fans are soldiers in the crusade. If we lose, wrestling loses. This isn't a battle, but a war to the finish! ☐

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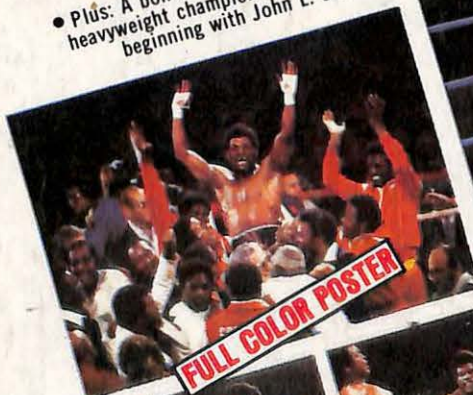
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